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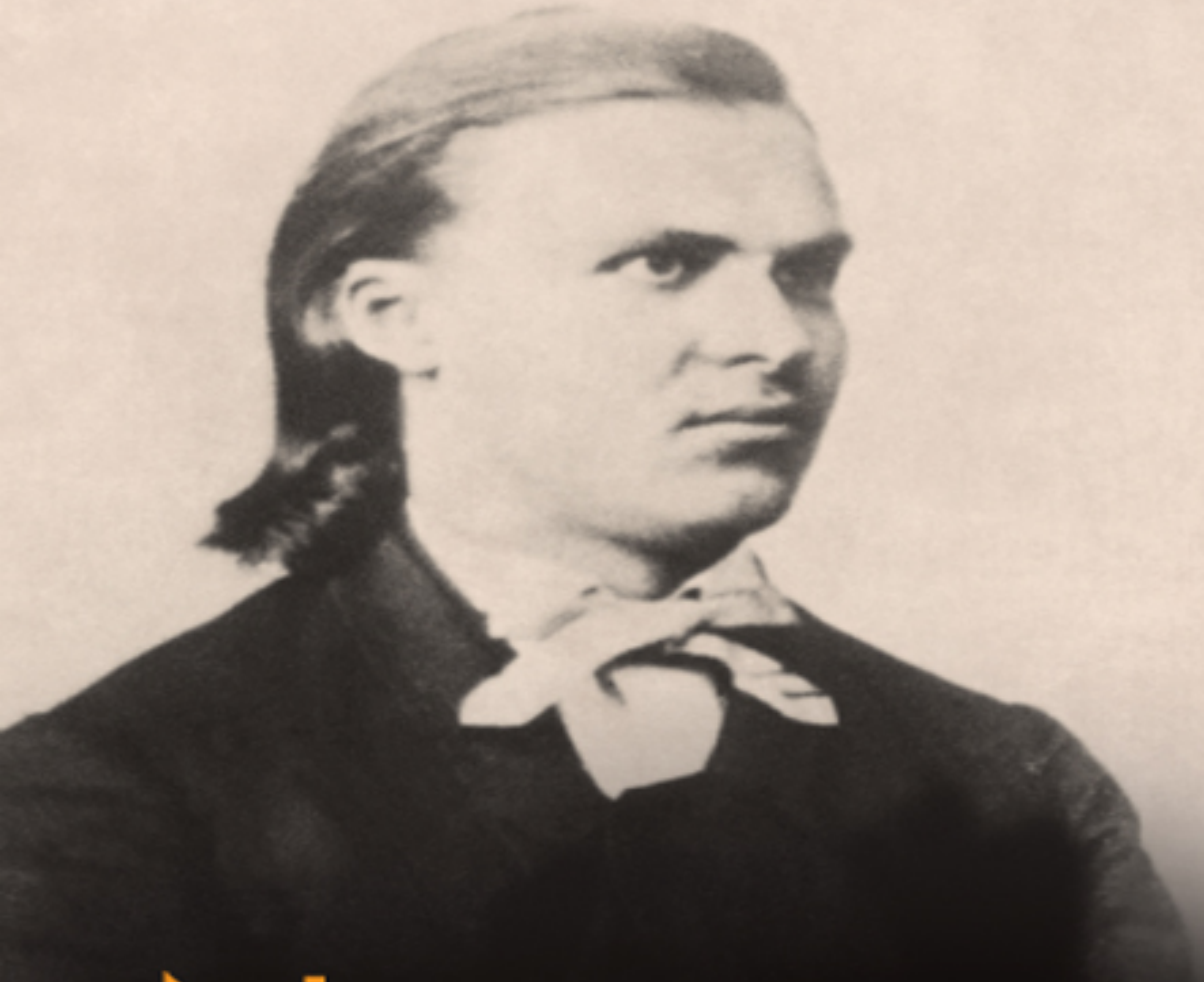

Nietzsche

On Theognis of Megara

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Oscar Velásquez

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Nietzsche

On Theognis of Megara

Renato Cristi and Oscar Velásquez

UNIVERSITY OF WALES PRESS • 2015

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www.uwp.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-78316-800-2
eISBN 978-1-78316-802-6

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Contents

List of Abbreviations

Introduction: Nietzsche's Aristocratism
Renato Cristi

Part I Theognis and Nietzsche's Arisocratism

Part II Nietzsche's Aristocratic Ethics: Command and Obedience

Part III Nietzsche's Aristocratic Radicalism: Charismatic Authority

Friedrich Nietzsche
On Theognis of Megara ('De Theognide Megarensi')
Translated by Oscar Velásquez

Friedrich Nietzsche
Studies on Theognis ('Studien zu Theognis')
Translated by Manuel Knoll and Renato Cristi

References

List of Abbreviations

AC	*The Anti-Christ*
BAW	*Schriften den Studenten- und Militärzeit 1866–1868*
BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*
BT	*Birth of Tragedy*
D	*Daybreak*
DTM	*'De Theognide Megarensi'*
EH	*Ecce Homo*
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morals*
GS	*Gay Science*
GTS	*'Zur Geschichte der Theognideischen Spruchsammlung'*
HH	*Human, All Too Human*
KGB	*Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefwechsel*
KSA	*Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*
PTG	*Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*
SzT	*'Studien zu Theognis'*
TI	*Twilight of the Idols*
UM	*Untimely Meditations*
WP	*The Will to Power*
WS	*The Wanderer and his Shadow*
Z	*Zarathustra*

Introduction: Nietzsche's Aristocratism[1]

Renato Cristi

Will it ever be possible to solve the puzzle concerning Nietzsche's attitude towards politics? Did he harbour any political convictions, and if so can they be identified? Was he an anarchist or post-anarchist, a harbinger for democracy, a closet monarchist, a Bonapartist, an avant-garde fascist or a radical aristocrat? Or did he remain tenaciously anti-political throughout his life?[2] This book propounds 'De Theognide Megarensi' (*DTM*) as one missing piece of the puzzle. *DTM*, a text that has barely attracted scholarly attention, was Nietzsche's valedictorian dissertation at Pforta. It marked the completion of his Gymnasium years, which were devoted mainly to classical philology. Later on, in the Preface to his second *Untimely Meditations* (*UM*), he rightly claimed that he was 'a pupil of ancient times, above all the Greek' (*KSA* I, 247). He also admitted that untimeliness was the only purpose and significance of classical philology. By this he meant that classical philology could only attain historical significance if it 'acted counter to our time and thereby acted on our time and, hopefully, for the benefit of a time to come' (*KSA* I, 247). With this statement he acknowledged that, in his hands, classical scientific philology had turned into what I would describe as political philology. In *DTM*, the earliest of his untimely writings, Nietzsche may be said to have acted counter to his time. He understood the Greek elegiac poet Theognis to be a child of his time and, in this much, he moved counter to scientific philology. Theognis' elegies attained significance only when understood as a response to his political circumstances. In its own untimeliness this early text by Nietzsche may be seen as an early manifestation of *Zukunftsphilologie* (cf. Porter, 2000: 226–7) and serve to illuminate Nietzsche's later ethical and political concerns. The feelings that his early acquaintance with Theognis aroused in him would remain throughout his life. He owed to Theognis his own aristocratism,[3] to which he adhered in order to act contrary to his own time and for the benefit of a time to come. After all, Nietzsche considered the task of philologists to be to

achieve a 'better understanding of *their own* epoch by means of classical antiquity' (Nietzsche, 1966: III, 325; emphasis in the original).

Theognis' life in Megara, his lyrical production and his views on the gods, morality and politics were the theme of *DTM* (1864), which Nietzsche wrote when he was nineteen years old. A few years later, he resumed his research as a student at Leipzig, and in 1867 the finished product became his first publication – 'Zur Geschichte der Theognideischen Spruchsammlung' (*GTS*). This was a text in which he put to use his formidable philological talents in attempting to decipher the enigma surrounding the redaction of the Theognidean corpus, its repetitions, fragmentation and multiple interpolations. But, it seems to me, Nietzsche's ultimate aim was once more political and not strictly philological. In 1826, Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker published his edition of the *Theognidea* and supported the traditional view that, since this was no more than a collection of aphorisms, Theognis ought to be considered a gnomic poet (cf. Welcker, 1826: lxxi). Because the fragments lacked consistency of content and tone, no unified ethical viewpoint or political position could be attributed to him. Nietzsche, in contrast, thought that a unified portrait of Theognis' life and times could be drawn by means of a more systematic reading of the fragments, and that this would help to elucidate Theognis' ethics and politics. Recognition of his aristocratism and his reaction to the historic collapse of Megara's aristocratic hegemony during the sixth century provided the social and political context that would allow a sound interpretation of Theognis' writings.

Gottfried Bernhardy, whose work was cited in Nietzsche's *DTM*, wrote that Theognis 'experienced all the misfortunes of his compatriots, and his verses preserve a historical monument that contains not merely the only complete report of the political revolution (*Staatsumwälzung*) at the time, but [he] also makes unambiguously audible the political beliefs of the Dorian aristocrats in honourable though jagged words' (Bernhardy, 1877: II, 524). The revolution mentioned by Bernhardy refers to the political turbulence that took effect during the seventh and sixth centuries culminating with the world historical debut of democracy on the Greek stage. As G. E. M. de Ste Croix acknowledged, 'democracy had never before been established in a thoroughly civilised society, and the Greek *poleis* which developed it had to build it up from the very bottom' (de Ste Croix, 1983: 281; cf. Schweizer, 2007: 355). The power vacuum left behind by traditional aristocratic governments was for decades filled by the dictatorships of the Tyrants that lasted until proper democratic institutions could be devised and put in place. Nietzsche took notice of Theognis' reaction to these events. He saw Theognis as the

intellectual champion of the defeated Megarian aristocracy, who sought to preserve the Dorian spirit and its noble virtues, and who also vented his spite and contempt against the rabble that now ruled his city. Though Nietzsche shared Theognis' fear of democracy, he also realized that Theognis' personality and character did not embody the old Dorian aristocratic ethos shattered by the revolution. He reported Goethe's portrait of Theognis as 'a sad (un-) Greek hypochondriac' (*DTM*, 139), and this could explain why Theognis was not mentioned in his books until very late in 1887.

In *DTM*, Nietzsche dealt with the life and times of the poet. Later, Nietzsche characterized Theognis, in the only reference to him in his published work, as the 'mouthpiece' of the Greek nobility (*GM* I, 5). For this reason an examination of *DTM*, a translation of which is published in this book, is well-suited to engage in an exploration of Nietzsche's aristocratism. I devote Part I to studying Theognis' aristocratism and its radical bent, and how it determined Nietzsche's own political views. In §1, I show how the interests that guided Nietzsche's dissertation transcended scientific philology and embraced a concern for the social and political context he had adumbrated in the *Theognidea*. I refer to this novel standpoint as constituting a rudimentary political philology. Nietzsche followed Theognis as he lived through the cultural and political debacle of the Megarian aristocracy. In §2, I seek to explain how Nietzsche, in opposition to Welcker and Theodor Bergk, sought to base the unity of the *Theognidea* on the poet's life and the changed cultural circumstances of his hometown. Nietzsche saw that Theognis anguished over the demise of the genuine Dorian ethos and, at the same time, endeavoured radically to change the sense and direction of the aristocratic stance. The Megarian aristocracy had lost the serene political prominence assumed by the Homeric heroes, and could no longer be identified with the Dorian temper. In §3, I search for traces of any influence Nietzsche's encounter with Theognis may have exerted in his later work. Theognis is mentioned explicitly in the *Notebooks*, but does not appear again until *On the Genealogy of Morals* (*GM*), where Nietzsche mentioned him again and for the last time. Yet one may say that Nietzsche's thought is marked, from beginning to end, by the aristocratic 'pathos of distance' he was able to observe in the *Theognidea*. In the first book he published, *Birth of Tragedy* (*BT*), Nietzsche immersed himself in the Dorian aristocratic culture and amplified the incipient political theology drawn in *DTM*. Apollo could now be said to stand for the old Dorian ideals energized by an infusion of Dionysian enthusiasm. Espousal of these two figures, Apollo and Dionysus, allowed Nietzsche to overcome the egalitarian rule of reason affirmed by Socrates. Instead of a democratic education, Nietzsche sought to

breed and educate higher individuals moulded by an aristocratic ethics of command and obedience. What follows then advances towards Nietzsche's middle and late works, where he explored the conditions required to constitute a new aristocratic state. One of these conditions meant debunking moral universalism, which he characterized as a herd morality that demanded equality and selfless obedience. Against it, he extolled an ethics of order of rank (*Rangordnung*) and domination. For Nietzsche, hierarchy, order of rank and the ethics of command and obedience were internally related notions.[4] In *GM*, he asserted that the genealogy of morality ought to be traced back to the demise of aristocratic values. He referred explicitly to Theognis when he showed that the terms 'good' and 'bad' referred to a now lost aristocratic ethical sense aimed at marking distance from the common people.

In Part II, I explore how aristocratism determined and guided Nietzsche's critique of the moral point of view. When Nietzsche surveyed past history he could only deplore the decline and fall of aristocratism, whether it be in its Dorian, its Roman, its Venetian or its *ancien régime* variants. To Theognis he owed the belief that the scourge of aristocratism was the obliteration of class distinctions brought forth by the moral point of view. Moral universalism overrules the distinction between naturally good, decent individuals, and those inferior ones who are by nature bad, pernicious and deservedly poor. In turn, this tends to dissolve the fundamental relation that keeps aristocratism alive – command and obedience. Moral universalism destroys the bulwark that sustains traditional authority, and legitimates the rule of aristocratic commanders and the obedience of loyal servants. The task Nietzsche saw ahead of him was the supersession of morality and its replacement by a culture which would allow for the restoration of the traditional ethics. In §1, I explore one of the key supports of the ethical core of moral aristocratism which I identify as an ethics of command and obedience. I propose this as a unifying formula that collects a cluster of ideas (authority, order, rules of order, mastery, order of rank, hierarchy and subordination, subjection, discipline, punishment), all of them related to the dichotomy master/slave. This will allow me to draw a unified and coherent picture of the philosophical and political centrality of the ethics of command and obedience in the corpus of Nietzsche's work. The sections that then follow in Part II, come to terms with interpretations which seek to separate and ultimately excise Nietzsche's ethical and political lucubration from the metaphysical core of his thought. I disagree with the view that separates Nietzsche's philosophical more rigorous elaborations from his political options. In an effort to rescue Nietzsche from inappropriate political

commitments, an influential line of contemporary interpreters asserts that his philosophy is not terminally contaminated by his aristocratic radicalism and that, as Mark Warren writes, it can be freed from this 'political straitjacket', or, alternatively, that his admitted 'political insanity' may be bracketed or restrained (Warren, 1988: 247).[5] If this were so, there would be no reason to pay serious attention to Nietzsche's aristocratic stance and his debt to Theognis in this respect. His aristocratism would be an adventitious affect, an anecdote more than a normative political doctrine or canon, although Nietzsche's aristocratism is not simply cultural politics (*Kulturkampf*) for it implies the necessity of institutional transformation in the political sphere.

I then trace this interpretation to the objections first raised by Walter Kaufmann against political interpretations of the will to power, the key notion of Nietzsche's philosophy. Kaufmann based his objections on a non-political interpretation of the will to power which he defined as a purely psychological striving towards selfperfection. In his wake, Maudemarie Clark reduced the will to power to a second-order desire, a purely formal drive whose content is determined by first-order desires, and has nothing to do with power over others. Similarly, John Richardson considers that the will to power applies mainly to drives or forces and not to people; and Bernard Reginster distinguishes between the consequences of the will to power and its essential nature. Its consequences may be political, but the notion itself must be defined as the activity of overcoming resistance, which is not tied to any particular effect or consequence. In response, I propose a political interpretation of Nietzsche's metaphysics of the will to power, and argue that the normative bent of that notion must be read against the background of the Dorian ideals Nietzsche owed to his acquaintance with Theognis.

The final section of Part II tracks Walter Kaufmann's anti-political interpretation of Nietzsche to an effort at rescuing his philosophy from an inappropriate association with National Socialism. It is undeniable that the Nazis sought the nazification of Nietzsche and that they found, in his aristocratism, elements that conformed to their own world-view. The issue is whether they were justified in doing so. I bring to light *Alles Lebendige ist ein Gehorchendes* (*ALG*), a short booklet containing a selection of texts from Nietzsche, published as an attempt to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche's aristocratism. *ALG* appeared in 1940, in an edition prepared by Friedrich Würzbach, then a recognized Nietzsche scholar who was also a Nazi collaborator. The texts selected in *ALG* had one theme in common – a call for the rise of leaders whose commanding authority would

foster a culture of obedience and subordination. Würzbach's booklet highlights the two aspects of Nietzsche's thought that Kaufmann missed, namely the political orientation of his ethics and its normative bent.

In Part III, I examine the radical disposition of Nietzsche's political philosophy which came to light when he pondered the future of aristocratism. Nietzsche hoped for the rebirth of aristocratism; but once the traditional authority embodied by past aristocratic regimes was undermined by morality, only the power of a charismatic authority would be able to revitalize it. A Napoleon-like figure would be able to rise above oppressive democratic legality and claim a new legitimacy. This formed the core of Nietzsche's aristocratic radicalism which Dombowsky has defined as a 'form or species of Bonapartism' (Dombowsky, 2014: 44). Someone like Caesar or Napoleon would then be able to decide on the exception and declare as Napoleon did, that 'I am apart from all the world and accept conditions from no one' (*GS* §23). Only a charismatic leader can look at things from a higher perspective and claim authority over the state. Postmodern readings emphasize Nietzsche's aversion to authority and his abomination of the state. In this regard, I seek to refute the postmodern interpretation and identify Nietzsche's political thought with aristocratic radicalism.

The postmodernist contention is that epistemic perspectivism and nominalism were used by Nietzsche to deconstruct the metaphysical foundations of the state, and thus guarantee personal emancipation and individual self-creation. Once the political surplus is excised, his epistemology contained agonistic elements that could be placed in the service of democracy. In my view, affirmation of Nietzsche's aristocratism, particularly his ethics of command and obedience, should corroborate the futility of attempts to grant him democratic credentials (cf. Ottmann, 1999: 462–6). Postmodernists do not take to heart that Nietzsche's anti-essentialism sought to subvert the democratic state. He correctly perceived that only the demise of democratic universalism could secure the restoration of an aristocratic state. I criticize, in particular, the position defended by Lawrence Hatab for whom Nietzsche's anti-essentialism, his attack on rationalism and his adoption of epistemological perspectivism, are instrumental in overcoming the levelling practices and exclusions imposed by the modern democratic experience. Though there are no traces of philosophical elaboration in Nietzsche's *DTM*, his encounter with Theognis would leave an indelible impression, discernible later when, as Negri notices, 'the philosopher became theoretically focused in the construction of his "aristocratic" vision of the human world' (Negri, 1985: 77). This aristocratic vision must be granted both temporal and conceptual priority. On

the one hand, it is important to recognize that Nietzsche assigned priority to politics over epistemology. Hatab is correct in observing that epistemic considerations were instrumental for Nietzsche, and that he used epistemology for political aims. Epistemology did not serve Nietzsche to filter and refine democratic practice, as Hatab claims, but to dismantle and overthrow it altogether. On the other hand, it is also important to realize that *DTM* was Nietzsche's first systematic and in-depth study of a classical author who enjoyed privileged access to the moment of birth of Greek democracy. It should be clear that Nietzsche took the side of the defeated aristocrats from the very start. Later on, he embraced Bonapartism as a way to revive aristocratism. In the final section I seek to align the key characteristics of the Dorian aristocratic system discerned by Nietzsche in *DTM* with his own account of a Bonapartist regime.

I: Theognis and Nietzsche's Aristocratism

Cyrnus, this polis is pregnant, and
I fear it will give birth to a man who
will take revenge of our bad hubris
(Theognis, vv. 39–40)

§1 A letter to Nietzsche's friends Gustav Krug and Wilhelm Pinder (12 June 1864) describes the initial steps of his research on Theognis (cf. Wollek, 2010: 282–3). He requested that his friends get hold of and forward to him a dissertation by Rintelen, a young philologist at Münster, who had lost his life a few days before in the battle of Düppel. He wrote: 'You would do me an enormous favour; this is the most recent writing on Theognis. As soon as you get hold of it send it to me. I cannot begin my work without reading this text' (*KGB*, I, 1, 283). He also gives his friends a brief description of the scope and nature of his endeavour:

> I am writing a major work on Theognis by my own choice. I have allowed myself again to be involved in a number of suppositions and fantasies, but I intend to complete this work with the right philological grounding and in the most scientific way possible. I have now gained a new point of view concerning the study of this man and, on many respects, I judge him differently than the current opinion. I have thoroughly examined the best studies that exist on this topic. (*KGB*, I, 1, 282)

His research had begun earlier on in April after being assigned the topic of his dissertation, contrary to his intimation in the above letter. In a note dated 5 April 1864, and addressed to his third tutor at Pforta, Hermann Kletschke,

Nietzsche requested permission to order two books on Theognis.[6] By June, his research must have been quite advanced, for he acknowledged that he had 'thoroughly examined the best studies that exist on this topic'. In spite of his intention 'to complete this work with the right philological grounding and in the most scientific way possible', he recognized he had again allowed himself 'to be involved in a number of suppositions and fantasies'. Should we read this avowal, as Antimo Negri surmises, as an early manifestation of *Zukunftsphilologie* (Negri, 1985: 5)? Were these 'suppositions and phantasies' what made Nietzsche decide to include the historical and biographical observations that constitute the core argument of *DTM*? Was he already aware, as Jensen intimates (cf. Jensen, 2013: 24–5), of the tension between scientific analytic philology (*Sprachphilologie*) and non-scientific hermeneutical philology (*Sachphilologie*)?

The groundwork for his dissertation was completed close to a month later. The next step was to prepare a Latin translation, a task that commenced on 4 July. That same day, he wrote a letter to Pinder: 'This morning I have begun my work on Theognis; five pages are ready. The *Latinitas* is painful. I have already laughed a few times this morning over the many short queries'. (*KGB*, I, 1, 287)[7] Five days later, on Friday, 8 July, he reported to Pinder that he had completed the translation by five o'clock in the afternoon. The work progressed as follows: Nietzsche translated seven pages by Monday, sixteen by Tuesday, twenty-seven by Wednesday, and the remainder by Thursday. Was he satisfied with the result? He found certain parts 'boring', others 'linguistically awkward', and the comparison with the Marquis of Posa 'strained'. He added: 'I have almost finished writing out in full my previous note collections on Theognis. Annoyingly, I often had to copy entire passages. I have so often cited Theognis, that I have quoted most of his fragments.' (*KGB*, I, 1, 290) What was the reason Nietzsche's dissatisfaction? Was it simply that he was annoyed at having to copy so many passages? Or was it, as Negri thinks, that he was unhappy that his appraisal of Theognis did not match a work that was supposed to be 'eminently philological and carried out "in the most scientific manner possible"' (Negri, 1985: 6)? This was the intention Nietzsche manifested in his earlier letter (12 June) to Krug and Pinder. But, as Negri suggests, his interest in *DTM* 'is, fundamentally, not the same philological interest that will determine his next work', namely his *GTS*. One could then say that his dissatisfaction stemmed from the fact that, in *DTM*, he did not live up to his scientific ideals as he had initially intended. Three years later, after completing his *GTS*, he also manifested his dissatisfaction with the result. This

time he criticized and turned against the scientific nature of philology. In a letter to Carl von Gersdorff (6 April 1867), Nietzsche wrote:

> I honestly do not want to write again so woodenly and drily, with such a logical corset, as I did, for example, in my Theognis essay, at whose cradle no Graces sat … For we would not deny that most philologists lack that elevating total view of antiquity, because they stand too close to the picture and investigate a patch of paint, instead of gazing at the big, bold brushstrokes of the whole painting and – what is more – enjoying them. (Cf. Negri, 1985: 40–2)

After reading this letter one may say, in retrospect, that his frustration after completing *DTM* was that he did not allow his 'suppositions and fantasies' to manifest themselves fully. He initially intended to maintain a scientific, philological approach, which he had only partially fulfilled. But he must already have felt that the demand that history should be a science clashed with the demands of life, something he would later make explicit in his second *UM* (cf. Jensen, 2013: 35–56).

In *DTM*, Nietzsche looked beyond the 'patch of paint', and gazed 'at the big, bold brushstrokes of the whole painting'. In its first section, he adopted a historical point of view and examined the socio-historical roots of the popular revolution that toppled aristocratic rule in Megara. Historical material conditions determined the fate of the Megarian aristocracy (cf. Cancik, 2000: 10; Oost, 1973).[8] In light of this background, the second section of *DTM* examined the reception of the Theognidean writings, 'transmitted to us in such a miserable condition, scattered and interrupted, mixed with parodies and verses of other poets' (*DTM*, 138). In his view, Welcker neglected to see that certain events, mentioned in the poems, needed to be interconnected and placed in precise order (cf. *DTM*, 125). By rectifying Welcker's strategy, Nietzsche was able to reconstruct the trajectory of Theognis' life and sketch a coherent biographical account. In doing so, he affirmed the unity of Theognis' work and rose above philological woodcutting. Leaving aside the analysis of separate trees, he took an overview of the forest.[9] The forest he discovered was the fate of Megara's aristocratic faction and of Theognis' lifelong devotion to its ideals. Finally, the third section of the dissertation, titled *Theognidis de deis, de moribus, de rebus publicis opiniones examinantur*, described the traditional disposition of the Dorian aristocracy. Nietzsche examined Theognis' opinions with regard to matters human and divine in order to illuminate how Megarian aristocrats were able to assert their 'dignity and authority', and discern 'how they imposed their superiority over the plebeians' (*DTM*, 158). He acknowledged a close connection between Theognis' conception of the gods and morals, and his judgement on political matters. This last section

demonstrates, as Negri rightly sees it, that Nietzsche's main interest in *DTM* was Theognis as 'philosopher' (Negri, 1985: 77–8).

Nietzsche began his dissertation by acknowledging Welcker's pioneering work in the field of Theognidean studies. In *Theognidis Reliquiae*, Welcker, for the first time, translated and critically ordered the extant fragments of Theognis' poetry, and related them to the poet's biography and the historical circumstances of Megara. Nietzsche acknowledged vast areas of agreement with Welcker's interpretation, except for two matters. First, as opposed to Welcker, he believed that close consideration of Theognis' poems would provide more accurate information concerning details of his life. Second, he disagreed with Welcker's decision to deny Theognis' authorship of a number of festive and drinking hymns, from which Nietzsche, following Goethe and Wilhelm Teuffel, believed important biographical information could be garnered. By sidelining those convivial poems, Welcker intended to streamline Theognis' body of work so as to lend support to the traditional view that it was 'gnomic' in character. In addition, Nietzsche acknowledged that Welcker was the first to show the importance of Theognis for the ethical thought of his epoch and that he was also the first to understand correctly the common use of the terms 'good' and 'bad'.[10]

In Theognis' poetry, Nietzsche found the clues to map the itinerary of the poet's life. He figured that Theognis was born in Megara in 563 and that his life reached well into fifth century.[11] His birth had taken place decades after Theagenes' rise to power in Megara, whose tyranny brought an end to aristocratic rule in that city and the ethical ideals that sustained it. Around the year 600, he was overthrown violently by the exiled nobility aided by Sparta,[12] aristocratic rule was restored and, for a brief period, a more moderate government was established. Plebeians rose again, this time even more violently and were able to constitute a democracy (cf. Plaß, 1859: 176–7; Davies, 1877: 131–3).[13] The commoners 'carried their hatred to the rich so far that they banished some and confiscated their property; whilst they intruded into the houses and banquets of others, and even passed a decree "repudiating" their debts to their aristocratic creditors, and requiring the whole interest, which had been already received, to be repaid to them' (Banks, 1889: xviii–xix). According to Aristotle, the aristocrats returned, overthrew the democracy and reestablished their rule. This period of revolutions and counterrevolutions coincided with an upsurge in economic activity that transformed Megara into a thriving commercial emporium and corroded the old Dorian ethos. In his youth, Theognis could still enjoy the old wealth and privileges of his

aristocratic status in a society that was beginning to experience an expanding bourgeois lifestyle.[14] Nietzsche could see how the changing life circumstances of Megarian aristocrats was reflected in Theognis' poems:

> It is clear, then, that Theognis, born of noble family, as a young man devoted his time to the pleasures of leisure, since in this epoch the Megarian nobles were unworthy of the integrity of ancient customs, and overtaken by an indulgence of behaviour that could be called complacency. This youthful cheerfulness of mind and levity are mentioned in:
>
> v. 1122 *With youth and wealth to warm my soul*.
> v. 1153 *May I be blessed with a life without harm and free of evil*.
> v. 567 *Enjoying my youth, while having fun*
>
> (*DTM*, 132)

From his reading of Plutarch and Aristotle, Nietzsche also gained a sense of the intensity of the social turmoil afflicting Megara following the demise of Theagenes, the reinstatement of aristocratic rule and then the establishment of democracy. Plutarch wrote:

> *when demagogues offered them the nectar of an excessive and immoderate freedom they became extremely corrupt and began attacking the rich shamelessly; and breaking into their houses, the poor claimed the right to feast and drink sumptuously, and if they could not get away with it, they violently and abusively grabbed everything*. (*DTM*, 127; cf. Grote, 1869: 43–4).[15]

Nietzsche traced the class conflict that affected Megara to the foundation of colonies and the consequent expansion of commerce. The wealth accumulated in the metropolitan centres allowed for many plebeians engaged in commercial enterprises to enrich themselves and their families. These *homines novi* sometimes surpassed the old aristocrats in wealth and challenged their political authority:

> If we seek to know which circumstances caused the progressively weakened aristocratic authority to lapse day by day, the first and most serious cause must be traced back to the time when many plebeians, especially in coastal cities, began to increase their wealth through large-scale and opulent trade. They quickly matched the nobles in their riches, outdid them in purchases and luxury, because they themselves no longer shunned any kind of finer elegance, but dedicated their effort to develop their moral character and spiritual qualities, especially since often, after their return from long journeys, they were enriched by knowledge. (*DTM*, 162)

By Nietzsche's estimation, in 533 the optimates were again defeated by the rising socio-economic class and sent into exile. Theognis, who participated in the political struggles of his class, had suffered expropriation betrayed by his own friends and companions. After this, he went into exile. He was thirty years

old when he departed. The basis for Nietzsche's chronology is found in vv. 1129–32:

> *Heart-breaking poverty does not bother me,*
> *or hostile men, who speak evil of me.*
> *But I am grieved over my lovely youth slipping away,*
> *and I weep at the imminence of a dreadful old age*
>
> (*DTM*, 130)

Theognis' exile took him first to Sicily; then to Euboea, Thebes and finally Sparta. His wandering lasted for twenty years, at the end of which he was able again to settle in his homeland. Nietzsche quoted from a passage in Aristotle's *Politics*, which described the overthrow of the Megarian aristocrats, and their return after having regrouped and defeated the plebeians. '*And in like manner democracy was also abolished in Megara. For the demagogues, to be able to confiscate property, expelled many of the notables* (*γνωρίμων*)[16] *thus creating many fugitives. But those who returned, overcame the people in a battle, and established an oligarchy*' (*DTM*, 127). Nietzsche summarized these events:

> It seems that Theognis left Sicily by ship and arrived in Euboea, an island whose nobles, holders of opulence and luxury, welcomed the exiled in a magnificent and splendid manner. He spent the last part of his exile in Sparta, at the seat of the nobility, where the exiles hoped that they would likely receive help against their hostile fellow citizens [*contra suos malos cives*]. It does not seem credible that these exiles would invade their homeland with their own military force without the help of others, would vanquish the popular party [*plebem*] and regain control of the government. (*DTM*, 134)

Nietzsche acknowledged that the returning nobility established an oligarchic government but that it was not able to restore the old aristocratic ideals and way of life. Though no precise date could be assigned to these events, Nietzsche speculated that the year 510 was a plausible one:

> all we know is that in the year 510 the optimates had already regained their power, since in that year, and in the following ones, the Spartans crossed the Isthmus, very often without impediment, to expel Hippias from the kingdom that he had usurped – this would not have happened, if at that time the supreme affairs of the state had been in the hands of the people's party. The aristocrats, moreover, maintained a permanent dominion from that year until the time of the Persian Wars and thereafter, although not even this much can be established with certainty through reliable testimonies. But tradition reports that in the year 468 the nobles were banished again by the plebeians, and that sovereignty was restored to the masses. (*DTM*, 128)

This marked the period within which Nietzsche located Theognis' life.[17] He gave credit to ancient sources which saw him attaining fame around the year 543, and established that he was still alive in 483 when the Persians besieged

Megara.[18] He also conjectured that Theognis died when he was close to his ninetieth birthday.

§2 The biographical observations in *DTM* were based on Theognis' elegies and were meant to refute Welcker and Bergk, who claimed 'that nothing remains of the whole of Theognis, except an interrupted series of countless sentential extracts' (*DTM*, 156). Nietzsche believed that of this disparate hodgepodge of fragments, enough information could be pulled out to draw a picture of Theognis' life. He remained cautious about this procedure, acknowledging that 'various fragments with different content had to be noted and described on the same page' (*DTM*, 156). But this did not discourage him as he did not adhere to a strictly philological approach; because Welcker and Bergk did, they had to concentrate on trees without looking at the forest. Nietzsche's historical instinct allowed him to move beyond this philological wood-cutting, see the forest, and grasp the unity of Theognis' work. The forest he saw was Theognis' personal life and circumstances. Essential to understanding his life was recognition of his aristocratic allegiance, and, at the same time, the collapse of Megara's aristocratic hegemony. This was what allowed him to interpret Theognis' poetry in all its depth.

Nietzsche was inspired by Goethe, with whose insights he thought he could make sense of the dispersed fragments. Goethe reminisced that, as a young student, he thought Theognis to be a '*pedagogically oriented rigorous moralist from whom we sought to procure some benefit, without ever succeeding. Therefore we put him aside again and again*' (*DTM*, 139). Compared to the classical image of Greek cheerfulness, Theognis came across as a 'sad (un)-Greek hypochondriac' (*DTM*, 139; cf. Porter, 2000: 234). According to Goethe, a more charitable reading of his poetry would take into account the historical circumstances of Megara and the wretched tribulations Theognis and his fellow aristocrats endured at the hands of the plebeians:

> *The propertied and well-mannered, those accustomed to neat domesticity, were publicly most ignominiously assailed, and their most intimate familial relish haunted, disturbed, ruffled up, humiliated, robbed, destroyed or driven away- and along with this class, among which he counted himself, Theognis suffered all manner of trials and tribulations*. (*DTM*, 139).

In Goethe's view, Theognis' poems could be properly and fully understood when one took into account '*that an exile wrote and composed those elegies*' (*DTM*, 139).

In agreement with Goethe's assessment, Nietzsche only objected to his view that Theognis wrote the elegies during exile exclusively. Welcker and

Bernhardy, for their part, maintained that he wrote them after he returned from exile. In contrast, Nietzsche thought that he did so throughout his life, though he recognized that the largest part 'were composed during the days when Theognis, afflicted by the cruellest calamities, and despairing over the salvation of the republic, amidst painful and pressing afflictions, would seek refuge in poetry as would a ship in a port: that is, before his exile' (*DTM*, 142). This would be the key to prove that he was not a gnomic poet; that the poems he composed for Cyrnus were not titled *Gnomology* or *Practical Maxims for Cyrnus*; that they related to all moments of his life, and that this was particularly true of his banquet and drinking hymns. Not all his poems contained ethical advice. Some conveyed to his disciple the apprehension and fear of the aristocratic party, others were *Trinklieder* to be sung by the members of the exclusive aristocratic clubs he used to attend.[19] Nietzsche also observed that the many variations in tone and content, and even inconsistencies, could be explained by postulating that Theognis wrote his poems at different moments of his life (cf. Negri, 1985: 30–1). His poems expressed 'either the bitterest pain or a never extinguished hate against the plebeians, or nostalgia for the homeland taken away by exile, or the worry and anxiety for the well-being of Cyrnus' (*DTM*, 142–3). Theognis sought to coach his disciple Cyrnus to be an ardent defender of the nobility and a party leader (cf. Davies, 1873: 132). With some hesitation, Nietzsche compared Theognis with Schiller's Marquis de Posa. Posa, whom he described as 'wholly devoted to the study of human concerns', thought that his disciple Don Carlos would be able to realize his plans and this justified his devotion to him (*DTM*, 143).

Nietzsche's reading of vv. 105–8[20] hinted at the deteriorated social relations between the declining aristocracy and the now enriched plebeians. In this conflict, Nietzsche sided with the Megarian aristocrats, as is evident from his characterization of the *homo plebeius* as intrinsically corrupt and incapable of honour, a preview to his later affirmation of a pathos of distance and rejection of a morality of slaves.[21] These became key elements of his aristocratism.[22] According to Anthony Jensen, Nietzsche shared Theognis' radicalism, but this became apparent only when he positioned himself inside the political agon. In such circumstances, he asserted the pathos of distance and a drastic subjugation of those who must live as slaves. At the same time, Jensen believes that Nietzsche was able to place himself intellectually outside and above the agon. From there, Nietzsche affirmed 'the necessity of the competition between Theognis' aristocrats and the opposed *δειλοί* as precondition of real flourishing. Theognis' *Vernichtungskampf* is rejected;

Theognis as the mouthpiece of one side of the early Greek *Wettkampf* is preserved' (Jensen, 2007: 328–9). Jensen believes that this marked Nietzsche's distance from Theognis' political position. Nietzsche 'could not accept Theognis' unwillingness to permit entry to the newly ascendant cultural class', because he thought that 'only through the productive Eris of which Hesiod spoke can cultural enhancement follow political upheaval' (Jensen, 2007: 327).

Jensen's interpretation as expressed in 2007 misses the mark.[23] First, it does not take into account that Nietzsche initially touched upon the notion of agon in 1867, in his Leipzig lecture 'Der Sängerkrieg auf Euböa', which examines the imaginary poetical agon held by Homer and Hesiod (*BAW3*: 230–44; cf. Vogt, 1962: 105; Pâdurean, 2008: 83–5). Moreover, Nietzsche owed to Ernst Curtius and Burckhardt the idea that the agon was the essential trait of Greek culture (cf. Porter, 2000: 276 and 412, note 219). Burckhardt first presented this idea in 1872, in the course of his lectures on *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, which Nietzsche attended (cf. Young, 2010: 205; Santini, 2014: 176, note 2). It is therefore anachronistic to interpret his early reading of Theognis in terms of the agon; at that time he was unaware of the full import of that notion. Second, even if one were to take the agon into account, in no case did Nietzsche envisage the possibility of political competition with the subordinate classes. He was deeply convinced that aristocrats would suffer defeat at the hands of democrats were they to compete in the political arena. For this reason Nietzsche sought the 'cultural' annihilation of democrats, a key feature of the uncompromising radicalism he shared with Theognis. Jensen does not take into account that Theognis' own radicalism was the result of the 'political' weakness of the Megarian aristocracy, which had become no longer the dominant rank but a minority party with no hope of regaining its former status. This explains why Theognis renounced the political agon, which he anticipated as irremediably lost. At the same time, he engaged in a *Vernichtungskampf* with his enemies and aimed at defeating them on a different battlefield – the realm of culture.[24] The comparison advanced by Nietzsche between Theognis and a character of Schiller, the Marquis of Posa, proves, according to Jensen, that 'Nietzsche found in Theognis a way to influence culture on a grand scale without resorting to governmental politicking' (Jensen, 2007: 326). By emphasizing the advisory role in politics exemplified by Theognis and Posa, Jensen identifies the root of Nietzsche's anti-politicality.[25] It is a mistake to conclude from this that Nietzsche abandoned a radical *Vernichtungskampf* against the democratic rabble, the *δειλοί*. Nietzsche rejected democracy because he wanted to shun the possibility of competing politically with the

subordinate classes. Experience showed him that in such a war democrats would not be defeated. He thus opted for Theognis' more radical solution – a *Kulturkampf* against democracy and socialism.

The bitter and wicked attack Theognis directed against the plebeians contrasted with his at times more accommodating and submissive attitude with regard to them. At one point, Theognis recommended aristocrats to take an amiable and friendly attitude when associating with plebeians, 'but in fact he should be possessed by an inextinguishable hatred against them [*odio inexstincto*]' (*DTM*, 162). Again, Nietzsche agreed with what he deemed to be a subtle observation advanced by Teuffel, according to whom Theognis 'postulates his theory all the more radically, the more he is forced to make compromises with reality' (*DTM*, 154). Theognis thought that he could in this way save the pride of his conscience from the humiliating treatment he received from the plebeians, and that he could exact revenge for that abasement by expressing his inner pride in writing. Theognis, whom Nietzsche described as a 'Janus head', would hate the plebeians *in foro interno* and, at the same time, somehow became 'milder in many ways' (*SzT*, 171) towards them *in foro externo*. Nietzsche acknowledged that the leading scholarly view was that, as Bernhardy put it, Theognis' elegies were based 'on the political and ethical beliefs of the Dorians' (*DTM*, 157). In opposition to Welcker and Bernhardy, he asserted that Theognis 'found himself in a situation in which the real strength of Dorian nobility had been already completely undermined from within; and its precepts, shall I say, were trampled down during the process of total upheaval' (*DTM*, 157).[26] Theognis could not adhere to the old Dorian aristocratic ideals, for those had been shattered by the revolution. According to Nietzsche, since Theognis' life 'coincided with the transmutation of all things and opinions, it could not be possible for him to retain the same convictions with which he seemed to have been raised up as a child' (*DTM*, 166). This explains his disagreement with the leading scholarly view and why he concluded his dissertation in agreement with Grote who, in his *History of Greece*, acknowledged that one could not 'discover in the verses of Theognis that strength and peculiarity of pure Dorian feeling, which, since the publication of K. O. Müller's *History of the Dorians*, it has been the fashion to look for so extensively' (*DTM*, 166; cf. Grote 1869: III, 44).[27]

A reading of *DTM* confirms the view that the origin of the aristocratic restoration aspired to by the mature Nietzsche may be traced back to his acquaintance with the poets of the Dorian nobility. In his early encounter with the elegies of Theognis, Nietzsche saw him as the prime witness of the defeat

of the Megarian landed aristocracy at the hands of the rising commercial class. The poet bitterly lamented that the Megarian plebeians had amassed wealth and imposed institutions that responded to popular demands.[28] This led to a decisive change in the self-awareness of Dorian aristocrats. They could no longer wield their traditionally undisputed claims to rule. As Walter Donlan observes, 'the traditional assertions of superiority made by the upper class had become less effective, because by the last half of the sixth century BC non-aristocrats had, with some success, appropriated all or most of the indicators of civic excellence'. In the case of Theognis, this meant that the aristocratic ideal was henceforth 'expressed in terms of inner worth', and that the emphasis would 'be increasingly ethical-moral' (Donlan, 1980: 87). Nietzsche was aware that, with Theognis, aristocratism acquired a different outlook. The Megarian aristocracy, put on the defensive by the common people, lost the serene prominence assumed by the Homeric heroes, and could no longer be identified with the Dorian aristocratic temper. In *DTM*, Nietzsche disparaged Theognis' accommodating and insidious character, no match for the martial fiber and patriotic high-mindedness of the nobility depicted by Homer. Later he learned to appreciate the radical tone of Theognis' anti-plebeian diatribe.

The transformed aristocratic ethos Nietzsche saw in Theognis determined his own aristocratism. Though he never ceased to stand by the Homeric heroic ideal, he had Theognis in mind when he later declared a civic and ideological war against democrats and socialists. In his first book, *BT*, Nietzsche expanded the political theology that accompanied Theognis' reaction and presented Apollo as a Dorian[29] aristocratic figure contrasted with the plebeian and secularized image of Socrates. But Nietzsche's interest in the tragic fate of the Dorian aristocracy was more than theoretical. To invoke Apollo, distant and reserved, was not enough to stop and revert aristocratic decline. For this reason, Nietzsche appealed to Dionysian intoxication as a way to arouse counter-revolutionary enthusiasm. Like Theognis, Nietzsche looked to the future for ways to restore aristocracy to its seat of honour. In the following years, he distanced himself from direct political action and embraced Theognis' deployment of a culture war against democrats. Nietzsche toyed with the idea of recruiting and training new aristocrats, in order to instill in them a counter-morality that could displace the democratic ethos intrinsic to Judeo-Christian morality. Because of his individualism, he was more comfortable with assigning that task to heroic superhuman figures, like Napoleon and Bismarck, who, in his view, best represented aristocratic values. Nietzsche saw that men like these could be the leaders of the aristocratic

reconstitution he yearned for. There is no mention of Theognis in any of the works he published later, except for *GM*. Here, Nietzsche portrayed him, and not Homer or Pindar, as the 'mouthpiece' of the Greek aristocracy *tout court*. He accredited his contribution to the conceptual change that named aristocrats 'truthful' as opposed to 'the *lying* common man, as Theognis thought and described him' (I, 5). Homer was not mentioned possibly because he may have been aware that, as Donlan notes, 'Homeric Greeks did not attain the level of the stratified or class society'. Donlan adds: 'the political system which forms the background of the epics is not a highly stratified order of "barons" and "peasant masses". The common people are not regarded as social inferiors' (Donlan, 1980: 19; cf. Starr, 1977: 120). In contrast, Theognis lived at a time when 'the Greek aristocracy … developed a "class consciousness", and some of the mannerisms of a true ruling class' (Donlan, 1980: 19). This was fertile soil for the rise of aristocratic radicalism among the Greeks, a view that Nietzsche well-understood and adhered to.

§3 Friedrich Welcker's 1826 edition of Theognis has sparked a long and broad scholarly discussion over the formation of the *Theognidea* (cf. Gerber, 1997: 117). He observed that Book I of that corpus contained a large number of repetitions and verses belonging to other authors (Solon, Euenus, Tyrtaeus, Mimnermus) and that Book II (vv. 1231–8) assembled pederastic verses, the so-called *Musa paedica* or *puerilis*, which appeared to be inconsistent with the exhortative moral tone of Book I. Welcker quoted Suidas, a Byzantine lexicographer, who, in the second half of the tenth century, had remarked censoriously that pederastic epigrams were scattered within the *Theognidea*. Suidas wrote: 'but in the midst of these exhortations are scattered defilement [*μιαρίαι*] and pederasty [*παιδικοὶ ἔρωτες*] on which virtuous life turns its back' (cf. Welcker, 1826: lxxiii; cf. *SzT*, 171). If the pederastic verses were strewn throughout the book, this could only mean that the composition of Book II, which collected those verses separately, was a later undertaking. One finds no mention of verses of this nature, and of Theognis' own pederastic tendencies, in Plato or other earlier classical sources which perpetuated his stature as a moral pedagogue.[30]

In *DTM*, Nietzsche avoided dealing in any detail with this issue by summarily accepting Welcker's position on the matter.[31] But the problem could not be swept under the rug mainly because, as Suidas' reference made clear, the reputation of Theognis as a moral figure was at stake, and Nietzsche intended to preserve his standing as an aristocratic stalwart. He was only

prepared to acknowledge that Theognis did not conform to the high ideals of the Dorian aristocracy due to questionable traits of his personality. These traits had already been highlighted by Goethe and Teuffel (cf. *DTM*, 139). Still, he thought that Theognis' defence of aristocratism and attacks on democracy remained untarnished. After completing his dissertation, Nietzsche began seriously to address the impact of the *ad hominems* that would be aimed at Theognis if the issue of Book II was not laid to rest.[32] In a short 1864 sketch titled 'Studien zu Theognis' (*SzT*), Nietzsche restated the main point raised by *DTM*, namely that Theognis wrote exclusively for an aristocratic audience, and that the rise of democracy shattered the context against which his poems could be rightly understood. He wrote: 'The transfer of wealth onto men of the people, and the universal spreading of knowledge and art, ruined a nobility of blood (*Geblütsadel)*. With this, Theognis' elegies lost the needed context which would have allowed them to be understood' (*SzT*, 168). The loss of the inner spirit that moved Theognis' argument could objectively explain the later misunderstandings and slanted interpretations of his work. The rise of democracy could also account for Theognis' character flaws. His bitterness, resentment and loss of self-esteem were due to his having to endure drastic changes in his situation.[33] At the same time, Nietzsche was ready to vouch for Theognis' aristocratic credentials. He praised him for his willingness passionately to battle against his political enemies in defence of his aristocratic caste. In a final plea, Nietzsche drew a more positive picture of Theognis that joins aristocrats in the struggle against the popular class. 'Theognis appears as a characteristic mind of all those noble figures that represent an aristocracy on the eve of a popular revolution [*Volksrevolution*] that threatens their privileges for ever and makes them fight and wrestle with the same passion for their own caste and their own existence' (*SzT*, 171). Nietzsche also anticipated the direction in which Theognidean studies would advance next, which he schematically described as follows: 'The spurious passages. Was the author of the *μουσα παιδική* [*Musa Paedica*] a fictitious elder, a monk? Etc.' (*SzT*, 172). This was exactly the work schedule he would complete in *GTS*.

Two years later, the *Sachphilolog* who wrote *DTM* would employ the analytical tools made available by *Sprachphilologie* again to defend Theognis against the more serious charge of pederasty, which Nietzsche thought would tarnish the image of the Dorian aristocracy. In a set of notes written in 1868 titled 'Der ursprüngliche Theognis', Nietzsche looked back at what he accomplished in *GTS* and summarized its findings. He now postulated that the collection of verses that we now possess was 'ostensibly not what determined

Antiquity's judgement on Theognis: it isn't moral enough. The verses cited in Antiquity were not cited as they stand now. Acquaintance of our collection was evident for the first time with Stobeaus' (*BAW* 4, 206). Stobaeus lived in the fifth century and it is only at this point that Nietzsche was able to detect the start of the process of additions, subtractions and rearrangement of verses that affected the *Theognidea* as known to us today. The quest was on to distinguish the original, intact *Theognidea* from later adulterated versions, versions that included the *Musa paedica*. Nietzsche could now determine that the last to be acquainted with the original Theognis were Atheneaus, Julian and Cyril. All of them preceded Stobaeus. Nietzsche writes: 'If Atheneaus, Julian and Cyril – the latter in 433[34] – did not know our redaction; if, on the contrary, our redaction was used by Stobaeus; it follows that its appearance must fall between 433 and Stobaeus, within the fifth century AD' (*BAW* 4, 183). While Plato, Xenophon read Theognis' original book, which did not include the contents of Book II and entrenched Theognis as an aristocratic moral leader, the version that came to be known to us, as it was presented in the oldest extant manuscript, the *Codex Mutinensis*, was known to Suidas and contained an assortment of offensive pederastic distichs (cf. *BAW* 4, 153).

After carefully exposing the gist of Nietzsche's argument in *GTS*, Jensen establishes that Nietzsche, loyal to his mentor Friedrich Ritschl, combined *Kritik* and *Hemeneutik*, and that he employed linguistic analysis, as demanded by *Sprachphilologie*, to enhance the historical argument he advanced in *DTM* (Jensen, 2013: 47). Jensen downgrades this approach as a combination of 'critical linguistic analysis – showing that the text must have been corrupted, when it was, and in what stages it was – with highly speculative if not outright fanciful motivational explanations about the character of Theognis and his redactor' (Jensen, 2014: 110). On a more charitable assessment, Jensen sees here a preference for explaining 'the historical developments of ideas against a socio-political backdrop' (Jensen, 2014: 110). In his view, his work on Theognis proved him to be 'a brilliant, highly creative, and industrious author'. In spite of the fact that, 'while many themes in his later thought bear a tantalizing similarity to themes in Theognis, it is fair only to say that he [had] a quite marginal influence in the mature corpus' (Jensen, 2014: 110).

There is something missing in Jensen's otherwise brilliant account. His critical analysis of Nietzsche's exposition perfectly sets out his convoluted genealogical exploration in search of the original Theognis. What I miss in Jensen's account, however, is a full hermeneutical disclosure of the motivation that fuelled Nietzsche's exploration. How can it be that Nietzsche's

explanations of Theognis' character qualify, in Jensen's view, as 'highly speculative if not outright fanciful', and at the same acknowledge Nietzsche's preference for 'explaining the historical developments of ideas against a socio-political backdrop'? (Jensen, 2014: 110) Theognis' social and political background is drawn out by Nietzsche from the best scholarly sources available at that time. His presentation of the Megarian revolution was neither speculative nor fanciful, but in full accordance with *Sachphilogische* standards. Those standards became visible in *SzT* when, in adumbrating the future direction of his Theognidean research, Nietzsche wrote about the need to delineate a 'picture of the times and critique of notes concerning the condition of Megara' (*SzT*, 171). He further defined this endeavour when he acknowledged the need to discover 'the basis of the present notes and temporal determinations' (*SzT*, 172). And he further specified that basis by locating it in Theognis' 'song circles' and the 'ancient sympotic poetry, especially the one from the old aristocracy' (*SzT*, 172). This ties the loss of the original Theognis to the fate of the Megarian old aristocracy which, he acknowledged, 'could not maintain itself beyond the Persian Wars'. If the *Theognidea* became undecipherable to later generations, this could only happen because the social and political conditions that sustained the life of aristocratic institutions had been destroyed. The elegies Theognis wrote were to be sung at the symposia organized by Megara's exclusive aristocratic clubs. This was how they had 'tried to preserve the old aristocratic group-consciousness [*Standesbewußtsein*]' menaced by a tyrant like Theagenes and thereafter by democratic supremacy (*SzT*, 167). The elegies were 'representations of agitated inner life written in times of distress, of political turmoil, of seafaring, of wandering around, of homecoming, of love and friendship' (*SzT*, 168). Nietzsche firmly ties Theognis' poetry to the fate of Megara's aristocracy. He acknowledges that Theognis' fame reached its height when the aristocracy stood behind him – 'together with the time of the nobility of blood the apex of his fame had long past its prime' (*SzT*, 169).

§4 Is it fair to say that Theognis had 'a quite marginal influence' in Nietzsche's mature philosophy? *Pace* Jensen, one should not underestimate the effect of Nietzsche's early Theognidean studies on his later ethical and political reflections, specifically in the constitution of his aristocratism.[35] It is true that, in his published work, Theognis was explicitly mentioned only in *GM*. It is also true that the overt aim of Nietzsche's Theognidean research was philological. But his philological approach had, as Jensen shows, a

hermeneutical component which focused on the ethical or political context of Theognis' literary production, and justifies using the description 'political philology' to refer to the hermeneutical aspect of his philological work. Nietzsche had sought to decipher the enigma surrounding the fragmentation and multiple interpolations endured by the Theognidean corpus (cf. Janz, 1978: I, 123).[36] But, as Negri intimates, what really steered his dissertation was not primordially the scientific analytical interest which would define the essay on Theognis to be written while a student at Leipzig (cf. Negri, 1985: 6–7). In *DTM*, Nietzsche used Theognis' elegies as a 'critical observatory' (Negri, 1985: 27) from which he contemplated the birth and proclamation of aristocratic ideals at a time when the Megarian aristocracy had been mortally wounded. In his *SzT*, Theognis appeared to Nietzsche 'as a sophisticated and run-down grand feudal lord [*Junker*] with feudal passions, as loved by his own epoch, full of mortal hatred against an aspiring people' (*SzT*, 171). As a 'contorted Janus head', Theognis could nostalgically contemplate a splendorous past and envision a repugnant future defined by a demand for 'equal entitlements' (*SzT*, 171). Nietzsche saw Theognis as representative of 'that bright, somewhat corrupted, and no longer firmly established aristocracy of blood', as the 'characteristic mind of all those noble figures that represent an aristocracy on the eve of a popular revolution [*Volksrevolution*] that threatens their privileges for ever and makes them fight and wrestle with the same passion for their own caste and their own existence' (*SzT*, 171; cf. Porter, 2000: 231–2).

In the third section of his dissertation, Nietzsche portrayed the traditional role of the aristocracy and did so by an examination of Theognis' 'perception of divine and human affairs'. Through Theognis, he illuminated how Megarian aristocrats were able traditionally to assert their 'dignity and authority' and discerned how much aristocrats were valued at that time, and 'how they imposed their superiority over the plebeians' (*DTM*, 158). Nietzsche acknowledged a close connection between Theognis' conception of the gods and morals, and his judgement on political matters. Since Megarian society was strictly divided along class lines, when a 'bitter struggle between these classes [*certamen acerrimum inter has classes*]' broke out, and Theognis rose as a champion of the aristocracy, he was able to pronounce one class, the aristocrats, as good (*ἀγαθός*), and the other class as bad (*κακός* or *δειλός*) for they embodied 'all evil, impiety and moral depravity' (*DTM*, 158).[37]

Nietzsche outlined five criteria that defined an aristocrat as opposed to a *homo plebeius*: (1) pure lineage; (2) the knowledge and management of war

effort and state functions; (3) the administration of the sacred rites; (4) the splendour of aristocratic wealth and refinement;[38] (5) the education of nobles in the liberal arts (cf. Schweizer, 2007: 358–60). According to Schweizer, the third criterion, the one that presented aristocrats as a 'bridge or link between gods and humans', was the crucial one. The gods did not communicate directly with the common people, but preferred to do so with aristocrats, with whom they maintained a certain degree of proximity. By placing aristocrats closer to the gods, Nietzsche advanced a 'metaphysical' account of the aristocracy, and account which served to validate and perpetuate the 'fundamental difference' between aristocrats and plebeians (Schweizer, 2007: 360). Since times immemorial the subordinate masses had been inculcated by the belief 'that the aristocracy were superior beings endowed with qualities which set them off from lesser mortals' (Arnheim, 1975: 183). But the proximity between aristocrats and gods allowed for a compact (*foedus*) by means of which humans would receive goods and beneficence in exchange for a sacred cult (*honores sacraque*). This cult, which remained a monopoly in the hands of the aristocrats, confirmed their role as intermediaries.[39]

This 'metaphysical' account was supplemented by an empirical description of the conditions that sustained the Dorian system of government and allowed aristocrats to keep the people subjugated. Nietzsche distilled these conditions from Theognis' nostalgic evocation of the Dorian state. Later on, these empirical features will become constituent elements of Nietzsche's own projected political order.

§5 The inchoate political theology, drawn up on the basis of Theognis' aristocratism, was further developed in *BT*. In *TI*, Nietzsche acknowledged that *BT* was his 'first revaluation of all values' and also the 'ground' (*Boden*) from which his will and his abilities grew (*TI*, 10, 5). The aim of *BT* was to vouch for the intrinsic value of aristocratic culture – the value to which all other values ought to be subordinated.[40] Nietzsche intended to trace the origins of aristocratic culture to Homeric times, then chronicle its extinction with Socrates in fifth century Greece and announce its imminent contemporary rebirth with Wagner.

The hierarchical order of primitive Greece, mirroring the Olympian divine order, was the theme of Homer's political theology. Nietzsche personified this hierarchical order by means of Apollo, the commanding divinity within the Olympic pantheon. The Apolline figure was the source of the many features that defined the aristocratic way of life at its zenith. First, aristocratic distance

was best symbolized by Apollo's luminous bow. Homer presented him as the god who shot from a distance and shunned proximity and familiarity, opting instead for the objectivity of a remote vision. The hierarchical world of Homer, where culture defeated wild nature, constituted an intelligible and secure order. This was consistent with the view that Apollo showed his splendour as the god of light and the sun (cf. *KSA* I, 554; Buffière, 1956: 187f).

Second, Apollo also presided over the world of dreams. Dreams revealed actions and figures profiled to perfection as opposed to the incomplete and not entirely intelligible everyday reality. The Apolline defined the measurable, the determinable and intelligible. Apollo was more contemplative than active, more prone to leisure than labour.[41] In *Human All Too Human* (*HH*), Nietzsche focused on what he called 'the aristocrats of the spirit' to define the aristocratic disposition.

> *Quiet fruitfulness*. The born aristocrats of the spirit are not too zealous: their creations appear and fall on a quiet autumn evening unprecipitately, in due time, not quickly pushed aside by something new. The desire to create continually is vulgar and betrays jealousy, envy, ambition. If one is something one really does not need to make anything – and one nonetheless does very much. There exists above the 'productive' man a yet higher species. (*HH* §210; cf. *HH* §284, *GS* §280, §329 & §376)[42]

Apollo, in the third place, was the deity who, in maintaining separation and distance, affirmed independent individuality. In *BT*, Nietzsche presented him as the 'deification of the *principium individuationis*' (§4). 'It is the will of Apollo to bring rest and calm to individuals, by drawing boundaries between them' (§9). In his *Notebooks*, Nietzsche also presented Apollo as the paradigmatic individual. 'The term "Apolline" expresses: the tendency to be perfectly for oneself, to be the typical "individual", the impulse that simplifies, defines, strengthens, clarifies, renders precise and typical: liberty under the law' (*KSA* 13, 14 [14]). Apollo typified individual freedom – a legislated, ordained and authorized freedom nonetheless. In sum, for Nietzsche, Apollo was the 'aristocratic legislation that declares: "So it must always be!"' (*KSA* 12, 2 [106]). This was not the empire of law, of the abstract rule of law. Apollo represented the figure of the individual legislator who could command and demand universal obedience.

The appearance of Apollo in the Homeric scenario coincided with the apex of the hegemony of the Dorian aristocracy over the conquered native inhabitants of the Peloponnesus. Nietzsche presented Apollo as bringing great stability, which henceforth allowed for the peaceful fecundity of the aristocrats of the spirit. The Apolline 'naive magnificence' was preceded in time by an 'iron age with its Titanic struggles and bitter popular philosophy' (*BT* §4).

Apolline serenity was only possible after its triumph over the Dionysian tumult. ‘Confronted with this new power, [Apollo] rose up again in the rigid majesty of Doric art and view of the world’ (*BT* §4). But Apollo’s hegemony would be challenged periodically by the reemergence of Dionysian intoxication, ‘so that the Apolline tendency should not make form freeze into Egyptian stiffness and coldness’ (§9). In this manner, the argument of *BT* was structured around these two hostile impulses and the conflict which inevitably ensued. This same conflict ended up uniting them in the fecund embrace that gave birth to Attic tragedy:

> These two very different drives exist side by side, mostly in open conflict, stimulating and provoking one another to give birth to ever-new, more vigorous offspring in whom they perpetuate the conflict [*Kampf*] inherent in the opposition between them … until eventually, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic Will, they appear paired and, in this pairing, finally engender a work of art which is Dionysian and Apolline in equal measure: Attic tragedy. (*BT* §1)

Nietzsche tracked the birth of Attic tragedy by sketching a genealogy of the Olympian gods. These represented relatively recent deities who rose together with the supremacy attained by Apollo over the chthonic divinities represented by Dionysus. The cult of Dionysus, immediately tied to nature, had arisen out of the celebration of ancestral rural myths. With Dionysus, we enter the realm of the imprecise, of what is vague and intuitive. This deity presided over the night where the orgiastic reigned: ‘Dionysiac nature desiderates intoxication, and hence proximity; Apollonian desiderates clarity and form; and hence distance’ (Otto, 1954: 78). Dionysus came alive together with the anarchic *populus* that shunned the *principium individuationis*.[43] Under its ascendancy, ‘all the established separations among castes disappear, be they necessary or arbitrary. The slave is now a free person, the aristocrat and the person of obscure birth are united in the same Bacchic choir’ (*KSA* I, 555). Apollo and aristocratic culture rose against this savage instinct and imposed form and order over intoxication and ecstasy. Nietzsche understood that the Dionysian was the basis and condition for the possibility of the Apolline and aristocratic spirit. This understanding was mediated by the adoption of a philosophical point of view: ‘The philosophical temper prefigures that beneath our everyday reality lies hidden a second reality that is completely different’ (*KSA* I, 555).

The Apolline/Dionysian fusion broke apart when Socrates appeared on the Athenian cultural scene. In *BT*, Nietzsche acknowledged that Socrates was the ‘archetype of a form of existence unknown before him, the archetype of theoretical man’ (*BT* §15). Socrates, as a theoretical man, had repressed and forgotten the Dionysian. Socratic dialectics lacked a substantive core and

reduced to a purely mechanical logicism. This was the same enlightened tendency that would later determine the rise of Alexandrian culture. Socrates, in Nietzsche's view, was 'the opponent of Dionysus' who forced its retreat from Athenian culture and the subsequent disintegration of tragedy (*BT* §12). Socratic reason was plebeian and deviated decisively from the Apolline wisdom that now 'has disguised itself as logical schematism' (*BT* §14). Nietzsche thought that, originally, intuitive and instinctive manifestation of knowledge was not infiltrated by dialectics. When Socrates started his pedagogical mission, he sought to formalize knowledge in order to make it universally transmissible. In contrast, the knowledge claimed by Apollo was not easy to acquire, and remained the innate and exclusive property of a few noble individuals. Later, in *TI*, Nietzsche confirmed this view:

> With Socrates, Greek taste suddenly changed in favour of dialectics: what really happened here? Above all, an aristocratic [*vornehmer*] taste was defeated; with dialectics, the rabble [*der Pöbel*], rises to the top. Before Socrates, dialectical manners were rejected in good society: they were seen as bad manners, they humiliated people. The young were warned against them. People were generally distrustful of reasons being displayed like this. *Honette* things, like *honette* people, do not go around with their reasons in their hand. It is indecent to show all five fingers. Nothing with real value needs to be proved first. Where authority is still part of the social fabric, wherever people give commands rather than reasons, the dialectician is a type of clown: he is laughed at and not taken seriously. – Socrates was the clown who made himself to be taken seriously: what really happened here? (*TI*, III, §5)

In *Beyond Good and Evil* (*BGE*), Nietzsche presented a similar conception of the aristocratic way of life:

> Socrates of course had initially sided with reason, given the taste of his talent – that of a superior dialectician. And in point of fact, didn't he spend his whole life laughing at the shortcomings of his clumsy, noble Athenians, who like all noble people, were men of instinct and could never really account for why they acted the way they did? (*BGE* §191)

Athenian aristocrats, unable to deal with dialectical sleights of hand, appeared obtuse and incompetent. Socrates ignored the fact that the aristocratic talent did not arise from reason, but from instinct. Reason made us deliberate indefinitely; instinct forced a decision. Aristocrats, exasperated by Socrates' eminently utilitarian and plebeian disposition, allowed themselves to be guided by instinct. In this noble decisionism lay the roots of aristocratism. In *GS*, Nietzsche wrote: 'the higher nature is more unreasonable – the noble, magnanimous and self-sacrificing person does in fact succumb to his drives' (*GS* §3). Higher natures can 'risk health and honour for the sake of passion for knowledge' (*GS* §3).

The virtue of aristocratic decisionism lay in 'the art of commanding and the art of proud obedience' (*HH* §440). The instinctive capacity to command was

further needed to ensure the leisure required for intellectual creativity. Aristocratic leisure presupposed a regime that authoritatively assigned productive labour to slaves. This was the theme of Nietzsche's essay titled 'The Greek State', which was originally to appear as a section of *BT*. Nietzsche was aware of the political meaning that attached to Homeric theology. The social basis that sustained the aristocratic superstructure was made of men of obscure birth who worked as slaves: 'The misery of workers must even be increased in order to make the production of the world of art possible to a small number of Olympian men' (*KSA* I, 767). The aristocratic state envisaged by Homer was supposed to secure 'an Olympian existence and ever-renewed breeding and preparation of the genius' (*KSA* I, 776). In his late *Notebooks* of 1887, Nietzsche insisted on the need for a social basis to secure the existence of an aristocratic regime. Leisure and other aristocratic dispositions could not be extended universally because the 'industrial masses' required virtues that were exclusive to them.

> Main point of view: that one not consider the task of the superior species as guide for that of the inferior (as Comte does), but that the inferior species serve as the basis on which the superior one rest in order to dedicate itself to its proper task, on which it may elevate itself. The conditions under which a strong and aristocratic species may preserve itself (with respect to spiritual discipline) are the reverse of the ones required by the 'industrial masses', by small shopkeepers in the style of Spencer. That which is available to stronger and more fertile natures, and is the condition for their existence – leisure, adventure, incredulity, and even dissipation –, if it were ready at hand for mediocre natures would necessarily and effectively destroy them. For these what is appropriate is industriousness [*Arbeitsamkeit*], rules, moderation and firm conviction – in sum, the virtues of the herd; by means of them, mediocre persons attain their perfection (*KSA* 12, 9 [44]).

An 'Olympian existence', the aristocratic way of life defined by Apollo, was not possible without Apollo's prolific espousal with Dionysus. Nietzsche lamented that modern culture could not constitute itself as aristocratic. This was due to the prevalence of two ideas: the dignity of the human being and the dignity of labour. These ideas interfered with the decisionist ethics of command and obedience. If the Greeks were able to develop a superior culture, they did so by means of the exploitation of slave work. Democratic states, based on popular consent, were incapable of generating an elevated culture.

By assigning capital importance to competition, emulation and also envy, Nietzsche strengthened his conception of the aristocratic ethos. He was indebted to Burckhardt for this. In 'Homer's Competition', he observed that 'the greater and more noble the Greek, the more intense burns the fire of ambition, devouring anyone who runs with him on the same lane' (*KSA* I, 787–8). He noted that in Greek popular pedagogy, 'all talent must arise from out of

struggle [*muß sich kämpfend entfalten*]' (*KSA* I, 789). It was not desirable that the genius overcame his competitors absolutely and consolidated his hegemony. The struggle could not end with the annihilation of the adversary. *Wettkampf* that led to *Vernichtungskampf* dispensed with emulation. Nietzsche observed that in the natural order, one witnessed 'numerous geniuses that incite themselves mutually towards action'. And he saw the 'abomination of autocracy' together with the practice of ostracism as the core of Hellenic pedagogy.

Many have interpreted this recognition of agonism as Nietzsche's affirmation of equality and democratic balance. According to Hatab and Appel, those who adopt this point of view do not take into account that the universe defined by Nietzsche's essay was the closed circle of the Homeric aristocracy. Agonism, according to Nietzsche, did not include the large subordinate mass explicitly evicted by Homer, even after it gained the political visibility reported by Theognis. *Pace* Jensen, Nietzsche joined Theognis in rejecting competition between aristocrats and plebeians (cf. Jensen, 2007: 327). The agon was essentially intra-aristocratic, 'an aristocratic activity, where the few talented types would compete for cultural and political status' (Hatab, 2008: 258; cf. Appel, 1999: 140–1).[44] It could not be waged against inferior men as it made no sense to compete with those who did not share one's status. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche wrote: 'you cannot wage war against things you hold in contempt' (*EH* I, 7; cf. Appel, 1999: 157).

§6 Like Theognis, Nietzsche looked back to the social orders of the past, and forward in search of ways an aristocratic culture might be restored.[45] Again, like Theognis, he sensed the futility of direct political action to reach this end, and opted instead for the attainment of cultural hegemony. The new aristocrats must retreat from active politics and abandon the public square. They would cultivate a sense of solidarity working in common to produce the highest human exemplars. An institutional framework to reinforce aristocratic solidarity was already visible in Theognis. He encouraged the formation of closed aristocratic circles gathered around symposia and exclusive clubs (cf. Morris, 2003: 21; Stanton, 1980: 239, note 37). His advice to Cyrnus was: 'don't ever join the *κακοισι*, keep them distant, and only get together with the *ἀγαθων*; eat and drink only in their company' (Theognis, vv. 31–3).[46] Nietzsche went one step further. In the cultural institutions he had in mind, his radicalism demanded of its members 'the suppression of all ridiculous claims to independent judgement, and the inculcation upon young men of a strict

obedience [*strenge Gehorsam*] under the sceptre of genius' (*KSA* I, 680). Suppression of subjective individuality went together with the exaltation of the individuality of commanders who demanded obedience. In accordance with his individualism, he fixed his attention on heroic monarchical figures, like Napoleon and Bismarck, to lead the aristocratic reconstitution he yearned for (*KSA* 11, 26 [449]).[47]

Following the pioneer work of Walter Kaufmann, the majority of Anglo-American commentators dismiss political readings of Nietzsche's cultural ideals; his preponderant interest was purely cultural and coincided with his own professed anti-politicality.[48] According to these commentators, Nietzsche was not committed to the formation of an aristocratic political regime; his heroes were not 'authoritarian, elitist or exploitative' political agents whose aim was to 'mobilize the masses';[49] there is no evidence that he ever took an interest in laying out detailed governmental programmes. Those who oppose this interpretation consider it to be an extreme view 'that Nietzsche's concern with culture was not also political' (Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 1). I would add that Nietzsche did not engage in overt political struggle because, for the most part, he was able to disguise it under the culture war he waged against his political adversaries. He sought to prepare the right soil for new commanders to rise as leaders of an aristocratic cultural revival. This meant cultivating exceptional human exemplars whose charismatic authority would overcome the limitations of a bureaucratic authority, whose decisions were kept in check by the formal juridical rules demanded by democracy.

In *FEI*, Nietzsche reinforces the idea that a true culture was essentially aristocratic. He thought that the birthplace of culture, its homeland (*Heimat*), was Greece, and believed it was possible to affirm that the German spirit was 'tied to the Greeks by the noblest necessity' (*KSA* 1, 713). At the time of writing, it was perceived that democrats demanded a universal expansion of culture and were fanatical opponents of true culture, 'one that adheres firmly to the aristocratic nature of the spirit' (*KSA* 1, 698). Nietzsche explained that the aim of democratic educators was 'the emancipation of the masses', a fundamental distortion because what was needed was for them to be put under the 'authority of eminent individuals'. What democrats intended was the overthrow of 'the most sacred order within the realm of the intellect, namely, the serfdom of the masses, their submissive obedience, their instinctive loyalty to the scepter of the genius' (*KSA* 1, 698). Nietzsche also lamented that the enormous advances of popular education had ruined the traditional teaching imparted by the German *Gymnasium*, which had become the seat of a spurious

Bildung (*KSA* 1, 712). Nietzsche attributed this phenomenon to the fear evoked by 'the aristocratic nature of true education' (*KSA* 1, 710). Democrats, he reasoned, rejected aristocratic education because they hated what was truly German, and they resented the superiority of individuals in leadership positions who sought to submit the masses to 'a rigid and strict discipline' (*KSA* 1, 710) – they thought it possible to convince the masses that they could govern themselves 'under the leadership of the state!' (*KSA* 1, 710).

Nietzsche was not satisfied with acknowledging the flowering of culture in Greece and its decline in the modern world; more than a reform of the *Gymnasium* and a recommendation that numbers should be drastically reduced, he outlined establishments that would foster the birth of a new aristocracy guided by great leaders.[50] Nietzsche had precise plans for the functioning of those institutes of high culture, which would become meeting places for his select group of future philosophical commanders who ought to maintain their distance from the large masses to avoid contagion by the decadent culture that encircled them. Similar to the counsel Theognis gave to his disciple Cyrnus, Nietzsche recommended that one ought to prevent the new aristocrats losing sight 'of their noble and elevated task due to premature exhaustion, or going astray from the true way' (*KSA* 1, 729). He foresaw institutions that fostered a community spirit, and their members would possess a singular disposition – they would be 'free from the seal of subjectivity, so as to be able to rise above the fluctuating play of the temporal and reflect the eternal and permanent essence of things' (*KSA* 1, 729). The purpose that assembled these Plato-inspired institutions was the formation of geniuses. It was important to impress on the young who would become part of these institutes that they needed to leave behind their personal independence, because 'the most natural and peremptory need of the young is the submission to great leaders and the enthusiastic emulation of their masters' (*KSA* 1, 745–6). And he added:

> All cultural education [*Bildung*] begins with the opposite of what is now celebrated as academic freedom. It begins with obedience, subordination, discipline, and serfdom. And just as a great leader needs followers, also these need of a leader to guide them. (*KSA* 1, 750)

The German spirit, 'noble and victorious', and its capacity to lead a cultural restoration, allowed Nietzsche to hope for a better future. The triumph of the pseudo-culture espoused by democracy was possible only under the auspices of the state. But the modern state was not the Greek aristocratic state. Greek citizens had 'a deep sense of admiration and gratitude, a sentiment that is felt

as offensive by modern individuals' (*KSA* 1, 709). Greeks saw the aristocratic state 'not as a border guard, a regulator or supervisor for their culture, but as a muscular companion ready for battle who accompanied his noble, admired and, so to say, heavenly friend through harsh reality, and thus deserved gratitude' (*KSA* 1, 709).

The genesis of a new aristocracy was revisited by Nietzsche in the works of the middle period when he discussed aristocratic culture and the authority it conferred. In Greece, during the sixth and early seventh centuries, tyrannies challenged traditional aristocratic rule and prepared the way for democracy. Nietzsche was very much aware of this and used it as background for his argument in *HH* §261, where he introduced Pre-Socratic philosophers as 'tyrants of the spirit' who prepared the way for Socrates and the 'quarrelsome and loquacious hordes of the Socratic schools'. Socrates was that 'single stone' thrown into the philosophical machine that made it 'fly to pieces'; just as democracy marked the decline of Greek aristocracy, Socrates engineered the demise of philosophy. The parallel between politics and culture is clear. As Nietzsche noted, in Greece, 'the history of the spirit exhibits the same violent, precipitate and perilous character as their political history'. He then went on to recognize that at present 'the period of the tyrants of the spirit is past', and had given way to that of the 'oligarchs of the spirit'. He acknowledged that 'in the spheres of high culture there will always have to be a sovereign authority [*Herrschaft*], to be sure – but this sovereign authority will hereafter [*von jetzt ab*] lie in the hands of the oligarchs of the spirit'. These oligarchs could be trusted with authority because they now constituted a group whose cohesiveness and *esprit de corps* could avoid the ineffective rule of Greek aristocrats and the calamitous consequences that followed the failed rule of the tyrants of the spirit. These contemporary oligarchs would form a cohesive group better prepared to engage in the struggle against democratic ochlocracy and all attempts 'to erect a tyranny with the aid of the masses'. In this way, we would not have to fear for the rebirth of a Socratic figure.

Why did Nietzsche, in order to deal with the issues that affect contemporary life (for example, the power of the press, mob rule 'of the half spirited and half-educated', etc.), conjure up oligarchs of the spirit instead of aristocrats of the spirit? Is it possible to think that Nietzsche assigned this political task to oligarchs rather than aristocrats because he understood aristocracy to be a purely spiritual authority not driven to meddle in political affairs? Isn't it true, as Vanessa Lemm claims, that Nietzschean aristocrats cared only for the spiritual and cultural elevation of individuals (cf. Lemm, 2008: 367ff)? In my estimation, oligarchs of the spirit were understood by Nietzsche as

contemporary aristocrats commissioned to engage in a cultural war against democracy and ochlocracy. Nietzsche did not call them 'aristocrats' because the Greek historical context of §261 taught him that Dorian aristocrats suffered a historic defeat at the hands of tyrants who then became the unwilling heralds of democracy. That defeat was reinforced by the parallel emergence of the 'tyrants of the spirits', namely the Pre-Socratic philosophers who unwillingly ushered Socrates into the Greek scene. The oligarchs that Nietzsche now had in mind were radical aristocrats who learned the lesson taught by Theognis and would not repeat the errors incurred by the Dorian aristocracy, their lack of cohesiveness and *esprit de corps*. The new aristocrats were oligarchs who 'have need of one another, have joy in one another, understand the signs of one another'. Nietzsche then added: 'but each of them is nonetheless free, he submits and conquers in his own place, and would better perish than submit'. Do we need further proof that Nietzsche's oligarchs were really modern aristocratic combative warriors? One should consider that later, in his *Notebooks* of 1885–6, he again announced a new aristocracy that would be constituted by the possession of philosophical knowledge: 'a race of masters, the future rulers of the earth – a new and vast aristocracy founded on a strict self-legislation, in the will of powerful philosophers and tyrantartists, that will last for millennia' (*KSA* 12, 2 [57]).

In the works of the middle period, Nietzsche considered the search for knowledge as essential to the aristocratic way of life. A contemplative attitude was only possible under one condition: liberation from work. In *HH*, Nietzsche wrote: 'as at all times, so now too, men are divided into the slaves and the free; for he who does not have two-thirds of his day to himself is a slave, let him be what he may be otherwise: statesman, businessman, official, scholar' (§283). This contemplative attitude was incompatible with the speed demanded by modern times. For Nietzsche's own aristocratic disposition, only the mentality of slaves accorded with the urge to be busy all the time: 'from lack of repose our civilization is turning into a new barbarism' (*HH* §285).

A passage from *D* showed the Germanic punctiliousness with which Nietzsche set out rules of good behaviour for his new aristocrats (cf. Cate, 2002: 464). The comportment he demanded was reminiscent of Theognis' instruction to his disciple and Aristotle's description of the *megalopsychos* in the book on ethics that he dedicated to his son Nicomachus.

> A person of aristocratic habits [*adeliger Sitte*], man or woman, does not like to fall into a chair as if utterly exhausted; where everybody else makes himself comfortable, when travelling on the railway for example, he avoids leaning against his back; he seems not to get tired if he stands for hours on his feet at court; he orders his house, not with a view to comfort, but in a specious and dignified manner,

> as though it were the home of grander (and taller) beings; he responds to a provocation with restraint and a clear head, not as though horrified, crushed, mortified, breathless, in the manner of the plebeian. Just as he knows to present the appearance of being at all times in possession of high physical strength, so, through maintaining a constant cheerfulness and civility even in painful situations, he also wants to preserve the impression that his soul and spirit are equal to every danger and every surprise. (*D* §201)[51]

The set of habits that Nietzsche wished to inculcate on the aristocrats of the future did not correspond to virtues that respected the interest of others, or virtues that instilled love for one's neighbour. What he had in mind were habits that strengthened the control one could exert over one's actions and that could boost one's self-esteem. Others should be made aware of the excess of the power one possessed. Aristocratic culture 'breathes power [*Macht*]'. At a minimum, it demanded 'the semblance of the feeling of power' so as to be able to intimidate others (*D*§201; cf. *D*§386). The spectacle offered by the submission of subordinates increased self-esteem and bred a 'feeling of superiority' (*D*§201). In his *Notebooks* of 1887, one finds the same connection between the aristocratic spirit and the ability to wield power: 'A culture of the exception, of experimentation, danger and nuance leads to a wealth of forces [*Kräfte-Reichtums*]: that is the aim of every aristocratic culture [*Cultur*]. Only when a culture has at its disposal excessive force may it, exactly for this reason, generate a culture of luxury [*Luxus-Cultur*]' (*KSA* 12, 9 [139]). To instill an attitude of contempt with regard to the herd and its passivity was part of the education of the new aristocrats. The herd was to be despised for readily surrendering to the power of the state and sacrificing individual freedom.

> The ideal of the human herd … against this I defend aristocratism [*den Aristokratismus*]. A society that preserves consideration, and a *délicatesse* with respect to freedom, must be seen as an exception and ought to confront a power [*Macht*] from which it must distinguish itself, towards which it must maintain a hostile attitude and consider it its inferior [*herabblickt*] … (*KSA* 13, 11 [140])

Nietzsche believed he was *ad portas* of a new epoch. Free spirits like him had now the opportunity to recruit new aristocrats among those born into noble families and those who had received a noble education. The task was made easier because the new recruits now brought with them virtues unknown to the Dorian aristocrats whom Theognis knew. Nietzsche acknowledged that the children of noble families who kept alive the spirit of medieval feudalism possessed ingrained virtues that far exceeded the disposition of the noblest Greeks.

> Loyalty, magnanimity, care for one's reputation: these three united in a single disposition – we call aristocratic [*adelig*, *vornehm*, *edel*], and in this quality we excel the Greeks … To grasp how, from the

> viewpoint of our own aristocracy, which is still chivalrous and feudal in nature, the disposition of even the noblest Greeks has to be seen of a lower sort and, indeed, hardly decent. (*D*§199)

In the works of the middle period, Nietzsche assumed that birth[52] and meritorious behaviour could bestow aristocratic status. Ruth Abbey observes that Nietzsche distinguishes between aristocracy by birth and by merit, noting that in Nietzsche's later writings 'the traditional notion of aristocracy by birth triumphed over the more meritorious notion mooted in the middle period' (Abbey, 2000: 98). Aristocracy, whether by birth or by merit, denotes 'excellence or superiority elevated to a position of power' (Stanton, 1980: 97); in this generic sense, aristocrats of all stripes expect obedience from subordinates under their command. But in Nietzsche's view, the legendary strength and inventiveness of the European aristocracy were weakened by the 'profound averageness' of the English people. He observed that 'European vulgarity' and the 'plebeianism of modern ideas' were the 'work and invention' of England (*BGE* §253). Traditionally, the British parliamentary model allowed aristocratic rule to coexist with democratic institutions. To this 'parliamentary imbecillity' (*BGE* §208), Nietzsche opposed his aristocratic proposal determined by an ethics of command and obedience. His aristocratic commanders would demand 'critical discipline and every habit conducive to cleanliness and severity in the things of the spirit' (*BGE* §210). They would constitute an 'aristocracy of peers who are used to ruling jointly and understand how to command' (*KSA* 40 [42]).[53]

Nietzsche condemned Christianity for its rejection of traditional eugenic practices. He saw eugenics as the most adequate means to generate an elite, sharing Theognis' disappointment when the poet lamented the fact that an impoverished aristocracy caved in to the charm of money and allowed its blood to be mixed with that of the new rich. Theognis wrote: 'To breed a ram, an ass or a horse, Cyrnus, we select a thoroughbred; but an *ἐσθλὸς* does not hesitate to marry the *κακὴν* daughter of a *κακου* father if he is given lots of goods, and a woman does not scorn the bed of a *κακου* man if he is wealthy' (Theognis, vv. 183–8). This lesson resurfaced in Nietzsche's later period. As noted above, in his *Notebooks* of 1885–6, Nietzsche indicated that great discipline was required to breed 'a new, vast aristocracy' (*KSA* 12, 2 [57]; cf. *BGE* §§ 203, 211, 212).[54] His radicalism demanded the generation of an aristocracy based on blood, which was the radical *tabula rasa*, the pure and absolute point of departure, for the delivery of a new aristocracy.

Nietzsche's aristocratic contempt for plebeians reached its climax when, in *GM*, he sought to produce a genealogical account of morality. He blamed

current historians of morality for their lack historical sense. English utilitarians, particularly, looked for the actual genesis of the 'good' in the wrong place. With Theognis in mind, Nietzsche observed that 'the judgment "good" does not stem from those to whom goodness is rendered' (*GM* I §2). On the contrary, 'it was "the good" themselves, that is the aristocrats … who felt and ranked themselves and their doings as good' (*GM* I §2). In this way, they sought to distance themselves from the vulgar and base, and this gave them the right to create values. This is the real genesis of the opposition 'good' and 'bad' that has nothing to do with utility. When those 'aristocratic value judgments' declined, morality came to the fore together with its opposition between 'egoistic' and 'un-egoistic'. In Nietzsche's own language, it was 'the herd instinct that finally finds a voice in this opposition' (*GM* I §2). Theognis allowed Nietzsche to find the right path, namely the study of the language of morality. Nietzsche first noted that in those words 'that mean "good", the main nuance still shimmers through by means of which the aristocrats considered themselves to be men of higher rank' (*GM* I, §5). And he added: 'They call themselves, for example, "the truthful"; first and foremost the Greek aristocrats, whose mouthpiece is the Megarian poet Theognis' (*GM* I, §5).

> The root of the word coined for this, *ἐσθλὸς*, signifies one who *is*, who has reality, who is actual, who is true; and then, in a subjective turn, the true one as the truthful one. In this phase of conceptual transformation, it becomes slogan and catchword of the aristocracy and turns completely into the sense of 'aristocratic', as a mark of distinction from the *lying* ordinary man as Theognis understands and describes him. (*GM* I, §5)

Without mentioning him, Theognis was also in Nietzsche's mind in *Beyond Good and Evil*, in the section 'What is aristocratic?', where he described 'the fundamental belief of all aristocrats' (*BGE* §5; cf. Negri, 1985: 12–13).

> The fundamental belief of all aristocrats is that baseborn people are liars. 'We the truthful' – this is what the aristocrats of ancient Greece called themselves. It is obvious that moral value designations everywhere were first applied to *human beings* and later to *actions*: which is why it is a bad mistake when historians of morality take the point of departure from questions like 'why are men of pity praised?' The aristocratic type of human being considers himself as he who determined value, he does not need to be approved of, he judges that 'what is harmful to me is harmful of itself', he knows that he is the one that accords honour to things, he *creates values*. (*BGE* §5)

Theognis, the mouthpiece of the Greek aristocracy, fired the first volley in the 'millenium-long battle' fought between the opposed values 'good' and 'evil' (*GM* I, §5).[55] Nietzsche admitted that the second value 'has had the upper hand for a long time', though he also recognized that the outcome of this culture war was still 'undecided' in some places. The battle was certainly no

longer fought in Greek terms. Nietzsche conceded that aristocratic values were better preserved in Rome, where they became identified with the Roman spirit, in spite of the ascendancy of Jewish values: 'Just consider before whom one bows today in Rome as before the quintessential of all the highest values' (*GM* I, §16). The Roman aristocratic spirit was reignited in the Italian cities of the Renaissance, and in seventeenth and eighteenth century France, the 'last European aristocracy' that would thereafter suffer defeat at the hands of French revolutionaries (*GM* I, §16). Napoleon rose to counteract this revolutionary triumph and saved the aristocratic spirit from that historical debacle. Napoleon appeared as 'the incarnate problem of the aristocratic [*vornehmen*] ideal in itself … Napoleon, this synthesis of an inhuman and a superhuman' (*GM* I, §16; cf. Dombowsky, 2014). Hope for the future revival of the aristocratic ideal must be placed in the hands of a Napoleon-like figure.

In 1862, two years prior to writing *DTM*, Nietzsche redacted a short essay to celebrate Napoleon III's *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851 (Nietzsche, 1862: 52–7).[56] Dismissing the rule of abstract norms, Napoleon III assumed and exercised the monarchical principle which allowed him to supersede the constitution and grant (*oktroyieren*)[57] a new one, thus reverting to his uncle's autocratic and centralized system of government. He also sought to reorganize society to make it conform to the aristocratic social pattern proper to the *ancien régime*. Nietzsche's enthusiastic praise of Napoleon III showed his early adherence to Bonapartism and its staple features. This cannot be ignored when one considers his *DTM*. Could this text be better understood were one to accept that it was written by a proto-Bonapartist? Seen from this perspective, the Dorian state appears as a version of the *ancien régime*, Megara's popular insurrection as a version of the French Revolution, and Theognis as the mentor and counselor of a counter-revolutionary Napoleon-like figure, whose aim was the restoration of the traditional political and social system. Dombowsky has aligned key structural features of Bonapartism with the mature Nietzsche's own projected new order (cf. Dombowsky, 2014: 44). In a similar way, it would be possible to align the five key characteristics of the Dorian aristocratic system discerned by Nietzsche with his characterization of the Bonapartist regime.

II. Nietzsche's Aristocratic Ethics: Command and Obedience

§1 There is a fundamental ambivalence in Nietzsche's conception of morality. Nietzsche wished to debunk moral evaluations and overcome their stranglehold on human beings. When defined by transcendent values and absolute reason, he saw morality as weakening our instincts, undermining the will and denying life. Life itself, 'which is essentially something amoral' (*BT ASC*: 9), motivates us to dominate and exploit others, and engage in violent behaviour (*BGE* §259). As alternative to the modern decadent conceptions of morality, Nietzsche advocated aristocratism.[58] In this way, he denounced morality which 'in Europe today [is] herd-animal morality' (*BGE* §202). At the same time, Nietzsche's immoralism functioned as a moral conception on its own (cf. *BGE* §226). Conventional herd morality was only one particular moral conception. Nietzsche observed that the morality of the herd was preceded, and would hopefully be succeeded, by other 'higher' moralities (*BGE* §202). As the 'will to power incarnate', individuals and groups 'will want to grow, expand, draw to [themselves], gain ascendancy – not out of any morality or immorality, but because [they] live, and because life is will to power' (*BGE* §259).[59] The higher aristocratic morality envisaged by Nietzsche ought to be understood, as he himself defined it, 'as a theory of the relations of domination [*Herrschafts-Verhältnissen*] under which the phenomenon "life" arises' (*BGE* §19).[60]

Historically, the rise of morality coincided with the decline of aristocratism. In *DTM*, Nietzsche was able to record the political defeat of the Megarian aristocrats, which decisively sealed that decline. Theognis was a prime witness of their defeat as he joined his aristocratic confreres in their attempt to hold off the democratic tide that followed. His elegies chronicled the nobility's retreat from the heroic disposition and martial virtues exalted by the Dorian culture and the 'inward-turning character of the evolving aristocratic ideal' (Donlan, 1980: 79). Like Homer, Theognis used the terms 'good' (*ἀγαθός*) and 'bad' (*κακός*) as indicators of class boundaries. But, with him, these boundaries now served to identify and assign class membership according to internal characteristics and not just physical or martial worth. Still, as defined by aristocrats from the perspective of aristocrats, the terms 'good' and 'bad' could not be used as terms attributable to human beings generically and serve as elements of true moral evaluation, but only assisted in the practice of prejudicial discrimination.

Nietzsche's work on the *Theognidea* allowed him fully to fathom the demise of Megara's Dorian aristocratism and measure its political and cultural consequences. As he would acknowledge later in *GM*, the term 'truthful'

(*esthlos*), which Dorian aristocrats also used as a distinguishing mark for their political and cultural superiority, lost its original meaning and was retained 'as the term for *noblesse* of soul' (*GM* I, 5). Nietzsche saw in this a sign of the ascendancy of the moral point of view. In his 'epilogue of a free spirit', he summarizes this ascendancy: 'The lords are cast off; the morality of the common man has been victorious. One may take this victory to be at the same time a blood poisoning (it mixed the races together)' (*GM* I, 9). Nietzsche bitterly lamented the triumph of morality and echoed Theognis' doleful requiem for the purity of blood lineages. Theognis had manifested his sorrow when he witnessed the intermarriage between Megara's impoverished aristocrats and the newly-enriched plebeians.

In *GM*, Nietzsche traced the genesis of morality as part of his aim to deflate and supersede the moral point of view. Earlier, in *BGE*, he had riled against moralities 'that address themselves to the individual, for the sake of his "happiness" … – because they generalize where one must not generalize' (*BGE* §198). Nietzsche's aim was to overcome universal morality and affirm what he considered to be true morality, a higher form of morality.[61] True morality took into account the relations of subordination and domination which allowed powerful individuals to assert their might and authority over others. As opposed to the morality of obedience, typically Christian, true morality teaches aristocratic individuals how to be commanders and exact obedience from subordinates. True morality involves an aristocratic ethics of command and obedience, and is expressed institutionally by hierarchical, aristocratic political structures. As Don Dombowsky observes, 'for Nietzsche all morality is a form of politics … [he] reduces the moral to the political' (Dombowsky, 2004: 10; cf. Dannhauser, 1963: 736). Domination and submission are not so much the 'first steps in the development of the human being as they are its continuous principle' (van Tongeren, 2000: 205; cf. Conway, 2008: 46). The higher morality espoused by Nietzsche was based on 'some relation between wills to power: between the strong and the weak, between the powerful and the submitted', "between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor" (*GM* II, 8)' (van Tongeren, 2000: 212).[62] By favouring the aristocratic elevation of those in charge of command and assuming the pathos of distance that confirmed and consolidated social ranks, Nietzsche turned morality into politics.[63]

In the aristocratic society envisaged by Nietzsche, for one part of humanity to ascend to the height of perfection meant that another had to be enslaved and serve in subordination. An aristocratic society didn't necessarily have to be a

refined society in its beginnings. Its pedigree could be traced to barbarians, men of prey and the conquerors of weaker societies (*BGE* §257). In *BGE* §260, Nietzsche presented a comprehensive account of the two moralities: master and slave morality. In higher civilizations, these two types could be fused and juxtaposed. In simpler societies, they appeared in their own right, without mutual contamination. Master morality equated the good with the noble, and despised unheroic and utilitarian attitudes. It abhorred mendacity and dishonesty. It valued traditional authority, namely deep reverence for age and tradition, and a prejudice in favour of ancestors. In contrast, slave morality was a morality of distrust and skepticism, which reduced everything to utility. Distinction between these two moralities originated in the self-awareness of rulers, 'pleasantly conscious of being different from the ruled', and the self-awareness of the ruled, either slaves or other kinds of subordinates.[64]

Nietzsche's ethics of command and obedience was internally related to his account of freedom. Whoever commands must be understood as a free agent; and whoever obeys must be seen as unfree. This does not mean that free subjects, as they naturally embody their commanding roles, are exempted from obeying. Freedom is not *Willkür*, an arbitrary will empty of normative content. As defined by Nietzsche, freedom was a self-imposed constraint. The free person was a sovereign individual who could be, at the same time, an obeying subject towards self-imposed constraints or duties. Nietzsche saw self-imposed constraints as essential determinations of freedom.[65] In *Twilight of the Idols* (*TI*), he wrote: 'For what is freedom? That one has the will to self-responsibility' (*TI* IX, 38; cf. Guay, 2002: 304). If commanders were free in the sense prescribed by Nietzsche, the same was not true of those who had to obey. They didn't obey self-imposed constraints, but only constraints imposed externally by commanders. This was obedience in the strict sense and was, in principle, opposed to freedom.

§2 Nietzsche's ambivalence towards morality may be resolved when one considers how he retraced the genealogical origin of what he saw as antithetical moral conceptions. In his view, 'throughout the longest part of history … the value or non-value of an action was derived from its consequences' (*BGE* §32). This 'pre-moral' stage of human development lasted until the measure of value was no longer defined by the external consequences of actions, but by their internal origin, 'in the most definite sense as origin out of an intention' (*BGE* §32). This signalled the passage to a new historical epoch characterized by a moral stance that Nietzsche explicitly

qualified as 'morality in the narrower sense' (*BGE* §32). Though the rise of this type of morality meant 'a great event' that brought with it 'a considerable refinement of vision and standard', it was still something 'provisional and precursory, perhaps something of the order of astrology and alchemy' (*BGE* §32). As such, it had to be superseded. Nietzsche pointed in the direction of a renewed 'inversion and shift of values', one that distanced us from morality in the strict sense and directed us towards the threshold of new 'extra-moral' (*aussermoralische*) period (*BGE* §32). As a self-described immoralist, Nietzsche greeted this passage to a stage beyond morality where, he intimated, 'the decisive value of an action [will reside] in precisely that which is *not intentional* in it' (*BGE* §32). Intentionality could still retain a presence, but it appeared now as a surface show with little intrinsic significance.

The clue to mark the difference between these antithetical moral conceptions – pre-moral, moral and extra-moral – lies in Nietzsche's explication of the passage from the pre-moral to the properly moral stage. At the pre-moral stage, the 'imperative "know thyself" was still unknown' (*BGE* §32). The transition to the next stage, advanced in a certain sense by Theognis, hinged on the Socratic affirmation of that Delphic shibboleth. Socrates adopted this 'imperative' as the foundation of his own moral ideal. Socratic morality, or morality in the narrow sense, privileged the inner person, the realm where externality disappeared allowing individuals to withdraw into their inner sanctuary.[66] Socratic morality shared this essential trait with Christianity,[67] and Nietzsche acknowledged this by conflating them under the rubric 'moralities of improvement' (*TI* II,11). Christianity was, after all, a 'Platonism for the people' and Nietzsche suspected that Plato had been corrupted by Socrates (*BGE*, Preface).

In sum, Socrates and Socratism decisively challenged the aristocratic ethics of command and obedience. By teaching argumentative reasoning or dialectics to Athenians, he provided an effective weapon for those who were weak, who remained in subordinate positions but desired to resist their masters: 'With Socrates Greek taste undergoes a change in favour of dialectics: what is really happening when that happens? It is above all the defeat of the nobler taste; with dialectics the rabble gets on top' (*TI* II, 5). Giving reason for one's actions was considered as bad manners amongst aristocrats. Whenever one would find oneself in the need to appeal to dialectical arguments and to give reasons instead of issuing commands, this was a sign of loss of authority: 'Dialectics is a type of *self-defence* used only by people who do not have any other weapons' (TI II, §6). Socrates originated the moral point of view or morality

proper. The ‘pre-moral’ stage of human development lasted until Socrates used the divine imperative ‘know thyself’ as the key to unlock the realm of subjective morality (cf. *BGE* §80).

Beyond Socrates and Christ, Nietzsche set his sights on Kant. In *BGE*, he attacked Kantian moral universalism as a hypocritical form of altruism. Nietzsche claimed that moral universalism constituted the favourite revenge of the spiritually limited against their superiors. Nietzsche thought that Kant’s categorical imperative was the paradigm of philosophical hypocrisy (*BGE* §5). Understandably, he degraded reason and elevated instincts instead. Nietzsche despised abstract, disembodied reasoning, which he blamed on the dishonesty of philosophers: ‘They pose as having discovered and attained their real opinions through the self-evolution of a cold, pure, divinely unperturbed dialectic’ (*BGE* §5). But what we have here is simply ‘prejudices, which they baptize “truths”’ (*BGE* §5). The prime case of this sort of dishonesty was the categorical imperative:

> The tartuffery, as stiff as it is virtuous, of old Kant as he lures us along the dialectical bypaths which lead, more correctly, mislead, to his ‘categorical imperative’ – this spectacle makes us smile, we who are fastidious and find no little amusement in observing the subtle tricks of old moralists and moral-preachers. (*BGE* §5)

Morality in the narrow sense, the morality that derives from the Socratic revolution, is anti-natural morality. In *TI*, Nietzsche formulated the principle of the morality that would supersede this anti-naturalism: ‘I formulate a principle. All naturalism in morality, that is all healthy morality, is dominated by an instinct of life … Anti-natural morality … turns on the contrary precisely against the instincts of life’ (*TI* V, 4).

In 1886, in the new Preface Nietzsche wrote for *Daybreak*, a book he had published earlier in 1881, the moment was identified when he began ‘to undermine [his] faith in morality’ (*D* Preface §2). This was when he became aware of the extraordinary authority claimed by moral imperatives. When confronted with inexorable, paralysing moral commands, our only response could be blind, unconditional obedience: ‘In the presence of morality, as in the face of any authority, one is not allowed to think, far less to express an opinion: here one has to – obey!’ (*D* Preface §3). In no case could this mean that Nietzsche was advocating wholesale criticism and disobedience to authority, or espousing anarchism (cf. Strauss, 1996: 196–7). He never gave up the craving for authority that he had so eloquently put forward early on in his lectures on the future of German educational institutes (1872).[68] What he was challenging in *D* was the authority enforced by morality understood in the

narrow sense, namely those 'majestic moral structures' that Plato had first built and whose foundations Kant sought to preserve and consolidate (*D* Preface §3).

Though contemptuous of morality in the narrow sense, Nietzsche adhered to morality in the larger sense. In *D*, he appeared enthralled by the 'whole morality of antiquity [*antike Moral*]' (*D* §207). In a section devoted to German attitudes towards morality, Nietzsche compared classical Greek moralists to gymnastics trainers who demanded from their pupils discipline and strict obedience in order that they excel in competition to attain personal distinction and virtue.

In contrast to this aristocratic formation, German educators taught their pupils to be submissive, to conform and follow orders. They instilled in them a morality of obedience with no possibility of learning how to exercise authority. This attitude stemmed from the rigours imposed on Germans by the Kantian categorical imperative which is essentially a command, a categorical command issued by universal reason, and not by the reason of an individual trainer embedded in a living tradition. Universal reason is abstract and issues impersonal commands – imperative abstract commands, but not the concrete commands of an imperative ruler. Nietzsche rejected Kant's attempt to substitute a desiccated moral order for the full-bodied authority of persons.[69]

Much earlier, Luther had demanded the same unconditional obedience. Luther, Nietzsche tells us, 'wanted man unconditionally to obey, not a concept, but a person' (*D* §207). That person was, of course, a divine person, a God. Kant is said to have adopted the same idea – he 'made a detour around morality only in order at the end to arrive at obedience to the person' (*D* §207). It was necessary to posit this god-like person in order to explain the possibility of 'unconditional trust'. Both Luther and Kant employed this argument 'as proof of the existence of God' (*D* §207). The healthy scepticism of Greek moralists disallowed this kind of transcendental argument. It pertained 'to their southerly freedom of feeling to ward off any "unconditional trust"' (*D* §207). For Nietzsche, this meant that neither Kant nor Luther could be seen as those Greek gymnastics trainers who, sceptical of transcendence, only sought the eminence and fame of their pupils.[70]

Nietzsche concluded *D* §207 on a note of hope. If 'the German' were to shake off the heavy chains that imprisoned him, he would be able to attain to great things. What would happen when 'the exceptional hour, the hour of disobedience, strikes?' (*D* §207). According to Nietzsche, whenever 'the German' reached the moment when he was required to accomplish great

things, he always lifted himself 'above [*über*] morality'. And when 'the German' reached that height, he would have something novel to do, 'namely to command – himself and others! But this German morality has not taught him commanding! German morality forgot to do so!' (*D* §207). Earlier, in paragraph §96, Nietzsche drew out the political implications of revitalizing an ethics that taught people how to command. Those in Europe who no longer believed in God, 'perhaps ten to twenty millions people', could make themselves known to each other and constitute a powerful political grouping. They would become the modern version of the Brahmins, the ideal arbiters between rich and poor, between commanders and their obedient subordinates.

Finally, in *BGE* §199, Nietzsche presented a schematic genealogical account of his aristocratic ethics of command and obedience. He observed that all human associations (families, tribes, nations) were constituted by the instinct of the herd. This instinct dictated that the many obey a small number of commanders. The practice and habit of obedience was the most universal social need and one could say that it was innate to humans. As a result of human evolution, the habit and practice has been internalized and this accounts for the structure of our 'formal conscience', and this defines the moral point of view. Conscience issues categorical commands in the form of a 'thou shalt', and individuals subsequently seek to give content to this formal imperative in order to satisfy their need to obey. This 'crude appetite' will be satisfied indiscriminately with anything that any commander 'shouts in its ears'. Nietzsche listed a number of those he called 'commanders', among them the authority of parents, teachers, laws and public opinion. The fact that, at this point, he listed personal and impersonal authorities separately does not mean that he recognized the legitimacy of both. Ultimately, he conflated personal and impersonal authority, and gave pride of place to the authority claimed by individual agents. Nothing was farthest from Nietzsche's mind than attributing agency to abstract entities. He praised the Greeks for whom 'the greatest abstraction kept running back into a person' and opposed to us moderns, for whom 'the most personal is sublimated back into an abstraction' (Nietzsche, 1962: 41–2).

The atavist persistence of the herd's instinct of obedience explained the ever-winding course of human evolution (*Entwicklung*), replete with advances and retrogressions. The 'art of commanding' has now been lost so that one day there will be no commanders to be found. And if some were to be found they would be paralysed by their 'bad conscience'. They would deceive themselves into believing that their commanding was a form of obeying, that in commanding they were only obeying higher authorities and merely executing

their commands. According to Nietzsche, this is what happened in contemporary Europe, and he had a name to describe this situation – the 'moral hypocrisy of the commanders'. Commanders hide behind established institutions like the rule of law and the constitution, instead of trusting their own will to command. At the same time, contemporary commanders seek to be seen as part of the herd and cultivate traits, foster communitarian dispositions and devotion to service the public. Even in situations when 'leaders and bellwethers are thought to be indispensable', the attempt is made to charge collective bodies with the task of making the necessary decisions. This is the origin of 'representative constitutions' (*BGE* §199).

§3 To reiterate, by overcoming morality in the narrow sense, Nietzsche believed he had attained true morality, a morality that took into account the 'relations of domination [*Herrschafts-Verhältnissen*] under which the phenomenon "life" arises' (*BGE* §19). In concrete terms, powerful individuals found in this true moral stance all the guidance they required. In *GM*, higher ranked individuals, aware of their superiority, designated themselves 'as "the powerful", "the masters", "the commanders"' (*GM* I, 5). The conjunction of these three designations, repeated in other passages of *GM* (cf. I, 7, 11 and II, 17), was not accidental. Nietzsche conceived them as internally related. Whoever wielded superior power (*Macht*) exercised rulership, dominance or control (*Herrschaft*) over others, and for this reason was able to claim the role of commander (*Gebieter*). In other words, whoever commands exercised rulership or dominance over subordinates, and this in turn was made possible through the exertion of superior power. As opposed to the morality of obedience, aristocratic morality taught powerful individuals how to be commanders and demand obedience. True aristocratic morality promoted life-enhancing relations of domination and command.

Domination and command are related to superior power. But how are they related to the will to power? Nietzsche announced in *GM* a book titled *The Will to Power: An Attempt to Reevaluate All Values*, a project that he abandoned and never completed. The title itself intimated that the will to power was the principle that guided the revaluation of values, and therefore that it should be identified as the principle of the true morality, the principle that will overcome morality in the narrow sense (cf. Reginster, 2006: 103). How was the notion of will to power related to domination and command? Since Nietzsche determined that true morality promoted life-enhancing relations of domination, should one interpret the will to power as a will to control, dominate and

command others? Is the will to power what drives commanders to impose obedience on those who they require to obey them?

Walter Kaufmann denies that this is case. In his view, for Nietzsche 'power means something specific … self-overcoming' (Kaufmann, 1968: 261). Will to power is the striving that requires us to 'sublimate' our impulses so as to organize our internal chaos and give style to our characters (Kaufmann, 1968: 480). Because Nietzsche constructs it not as a political, but as a psychological notion, it cannot accurately be described as 'a will to affect others or as a will to "realize" oneself: it is essentially a striving to transcend or perfect oneself' (Kaufmann, 1968: 248).[71] Self-mastery, and not the control or domination of others, is the primordial manifestation of the will to power.[72] To prove his point, Kaufmann refers to the section on self-overcoming in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (*Z*), where Nietzsche postulates that 'nothing that is alive is sufficient unto itself'. This would explain why the will to power is a fundamental drive to perfect oneself. This passage appears in the section where life reveals its secret to Zarathustra, its secret being the following: 'where life is, there is also will' (*Z* II, 12). Yet the will that life possesses is not the will to life, 'but the will to power' (*Z* II, 12). Life is wholly and continually overcome by the will to power, so that life is always ready to perish for things that are higher than life itself. What can be higher than life? In Nietzsche's view, power is higher than life – 'life sacrifices itself for the sake of power' (*Z* II, 12).

Kaufmann is right when he asserts that the will to power drives us to transcend ourselves and move beyond our limitations. But at no point did Nietzsche intend to convey the idea that the will to power was a purely psychological notion and not meant politically to 'affect others'. Nietzsche's interest in *Z* II, 'Of Self-Overcoming', was to subordinate the aims of life to the higher aims of the will to power. When Zarathustra declares: '*Alles Lebendige ist ein Gehorchendes*' (All living things are obeying creatures), he means that all living things are driven by and obey the will to power. This view is reaffirmed a few lines later: 'Wherever I found a living thing there I found will to power' (Z II, 12). All living things are at the mercy of the will to power, the fundamental drive that guides all their actions. Zarathustra adds a second observation that explicitly takes into account the relation command/obedience, which implies the presence of others: 'And this is the second thing: he who cannot obey himself will be commanded' (*Z* II, 12). Not obeying oneself can only mean not listening to the will to power and what it commands, which opens the possibility for others to exercise command over and affect the one who disobeys the will to power. By tying the will to power to the notions of

command and obedience, Nietzsche has defined it as more than an ability to obtain what one desires without affecting others. Contrary to what Kaufmann maintains, the will to power is meant to 'affect others' because the ability to obtain what one desires is internally related to the obedience that others can extract from us, and vice versa. Zarathustra can then conclude: 'But this is the third thing I heard: that commanding is more difficult than obeying. And not only because the commander bears the burden of all who obey, and that this burden can easily crush him … The living thing always risks himself when he commands' (*Z* II, 12).

These texts make clear that what ultimately commands in us is the will to power. We, as living things commanded by the will to power, can either disobey or obey its call. Those who disobey will end up being commanded, and those who obey will be commanders.[73] Will to power is not only a drive to transcend or perfect oneself, but also articulates the relation of command and obedience. In life, some will be the commanders of others, and these others will be the obedient subordinates of their commanders. In turn, both commanders and their followers are obedient subordinates of a will to power which transcends them.[74]

Kaufmann's view has become a leading trend among scholars who see Nazi appropriations of Nietzsche as gross misappropriations. Those, like Stern, for example, who consider that Hitler's life and political career 'comes close to an embodiment of the will to power' (Stern, 1979: 120), are accused of simplistic and superficial readings of Nietzsche's work that overlook his 'most grounding, philosophical remarks' (Richardson, 1996: 19). There is much in Nazism, its anti-Semitism, militarism, populism, rabid nationalism and xenophobia, that is foreign to Nietzsche (cf. Conway, 2003: 173). It is inconceivable that he himself, who loved solitude and was personally anti-political, would have adhered to and acquired membership in the Nazi party, or any other political organization for that matter (Kaufmann, 1968: 412; cf. Dannhauser, 1963: 743–4; Conway, 1997: 32–3).[75] I do not delve into a discussion of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the Nazi normative reading of Nietzsche's morality; I only observe that the Nazis perceived that his conception of true morality and the will to power necessarily involved relations of domination. This matched their attribution of supreme power to aristocratic leaders, and their defence of the right of commanders to demand obedience and subordination. Nietzsche's aristocratic ethics of command and obedience encouraged Nazis by reinforcing their disdain for democracy and predilection for the rule of personal authorities.

Kaufmann's non-political interpretation of the will to power has won many followers. One of the most influential is Maudemarie Clark. While substantially agreeing with Kaufmann, she clarifies and advances his position by refuting some of its aspects. In his article on Nietzsche for the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Kaufmann distanced himself from Nietzsche's assumption that power constitutes 'the only thing wanted for its own sake', that it is 'the only ultimate motive' (Kaufmann, 1967: 511). At the same time, he saw that Nietzsche's insight that 'the will to power [is] at work everywhere' was illuminating and did not empty that notion of all meaning (Kaufmann, 1967: 511). Clark disagrees with him on this point. To adduce the will to power to be 'at work everywhere' detracts, in her view, from its enlightening character, for it eliminates contrast with other motives. The solution is to admit that 'at least some possible motives are not instances of [the will to power], and the contrast between power and other possible motives is preserved' (Clark, 1990: 210–11). Clark proceeds to define power as 'the ability to do or get what one wants' (Clark, 1990: 211). In agreement with Kaufmann, she adds that the will to power has 'nothing essential to do with power over others, but is a sense of one's *effectiveness* in the world' (Clark, 1990: 211). In this way, the will to power reduces to a second-order desire, the aim of which is fulfilment and enhancement of the ability to satisfy one's first-order desires. This interpretation robs the will to power of first-order content and orientation. As a result, Clark's interpretation leaves it as a purely formal drive whose content will be determined by firstorder desires.

Though Kaufmann is wrong in rejecting the political orientation of Nietzsche's conception of the will to power, he is right in describing that notion as something that Nietzsche considers to be an end in itself, and not merely a means. In other words, he is right in taking Nietzsche's will to power as a first-order desire. In Kaufmann's view, Nietzsche, as opposed to Hobbes, 'values power not as a means but as a state of being that man desires for its own sake as his own ultimate end' (Kaufmann, 1968: 360).[76]

Kaufmann's tangled legacy also influences the work of John Richardson. Following in Kaufmann's steps, Richardson notices that 'more casual readers' of Nietzsche assume that when he refers to the will to power 'he is speaking of a human willing that aims at power over other persons as its ultimate end' (Richardson, 1996: 19). This encourages the suspicion that 'he wasn't very much misappropriated by the Fascists' (Richardson, 1996). When one proceeds to read Nietzsche 'on the basis of his most grounding, philosophical remarks', one will be able to gain a more 'subtle and even plausible' interpretation of his

views (Richardson, 1996). The first reward one obtains from adopting a philosophical point of view is that Nietzsche applies the will to power 'not to people, but to "drives" or "forces", simpler units which Nietzsche sometimes even calls "points" and "power quanta"' (Richardson, 1996: 20). Only after analysing drives and reducing them to units of will to power will it be possible to extend the analysis to persons.

Richardson appeals principally to *BGE* §36 to show that for Nietzsche the only reality we have access to is that of our drives. According to Nietzsche, on the assumption 'that nothing is "given" as real except our world of desires and passions, that we can rise or sink to no other "reality" than the reality of our drives', could these drives be sufficient to explain everything, even the mechanical world? Could this primitive, preformed (*Vorform*) life or will be recognized as efficient? Even if one were to admit that the efficiency of the will is limited to operate exclusively on the will, and not on matter, one is forced to grant hypothetically that all mechanical occurrences and our entire instinctual life (*Triebsleben*) are effects of will, namely the will to power. The world as a whole is nothing but will to power. In Richardson's reading, Nietzsche has proceeded analytically by identifying drives as the 'simplest units' of will to power and only then proceeded synthetically to reach a 'complex extension to persons' (Richardson, 1996: 20). It seems to me that nothing in this text indicates that Nietzsche intends such an analysis; his aim is merely to show that behind our drives and passions, and even behind the mechanical world, one needs to postulate the will to power as the ultimate efficient force.[77]

Bernard Reginster shares the anti-political interpretation first defended by Kaufmann, and rejects defining the will to power in terms of control and domination. According to the latter interpretation, he argues, 'Nazi expansionism is not only a phenomenon Nietzsche could have predicted, but also one of which he would have approved' (Reginster, 2006: 105). To avoid this possibility, Reginster follows Clark and distinguishes between the 'by products or consequences' of the will to power, and what the pursuit of the will to power properly 'consists of' (Reginster, 2006: 105). Domination and exploitation are mere consequences of the will to power and do not manifest its essential nature. Reginster offers *BGE* §259 as evidence for his view. Nietzsche writes:

> Life itself is *essentially* [*wesentlich*] appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one's forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation … 'Exploitation' does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect or primitive society: it belongs to the

> *essence* [*Wesen*] of what lives [*des Lebendigen*], as a basic organic function;[78] it is a *consequence* [*Folge*] of the will to power, which is after all the will of life.

Reginster believes that because Nietzsche presents exploitation as a consequence of the pursuit of the will to power, exploitation of others is not 'what that pursuit consists of' (Reginster, 2006: 126). What essentially characterizes the will to power is the will to overcome resistence, or more accurately, 'a will to the very activity of overcoming resistence' (Reginster, 2006: 127), and this activity of overcoming the resistence is not tied to any determinate content like domination or exploitation of others. These contents are mere consequences of the will to power and do not constitute its essence.

But Reginster mistakenly assumes that Nietzsche, in the text quoted above, intends to draw a distinction between essential and non-essential considerations of the will to power. What Nietzsche actually says is that life is 'essentially' exploitation and that exploitation belongs to the 'essence' of what lives. He clearly identifies the notion of life with that of exploitation, and also declares that 'life is *eben* [precisely, exactly] will to power' and that the will to power 'is *eben* the will of life'. By pointing to the intrinsic identity of life and will to power, he is able further to expand his 'identity argument'. The language he uses throughout is that of essential identity, and at no point does he suggest a distinction between essential and non-essential considerations. When he states that exploitation is a 'consequence' of the '*eigentlichen* [actual, real, specific, essential] will to power', which he identifies with the 'will of life', Nietzsche does not intend to mark a discontinuity with respect to the essential identities he has uncovered. To inject a distinction at this point, where there is no direct evidence that Nietzsche intended to do so, is not admissible. The will to power is essentially exploitation; exploitation follows essentially from the will to power.

Why does Reginster draw the distinction between what the will of power 'essentially' consists of and what he sees as its non-essential consequences? In agreement with Clark and Richardson, Reginster postulates a purely formal, as opposed to a substantive, conception of the will to power. He thinks that the concept of power is 'in and of itself, devoid of any *determinate content*. It gets a determinate content only from its relation to some determinate desire or drive' (Reginster 2006: 132). The substantive/formal distinction he draws allows him to define the will to power as a second-order desire. The will to power 'is specifically, a desire for the overcoming of resistance in the pursuit of some determinate first-order desire' (Reginster, 2006: 132). Defined as a second-order desire, the will to power is shorn from any determinate content

(like domination or exploitation), thus clearing Nietzsche's philosophy from any association with Nazism.

But then Reginster goes on to admit that increased control and domination are 'natural and frequent *consequences*' of the pursuit of power, and then recognizes that the success of the will to power to overcome resistance 'will result in some sort of increased control or domination' (Reginster, 2006: 138). He can maintain this view because his argument assumes that consequences are external to and do not constitute the essence of the will to power. 'Increased control or domination' must be seen as a contingent consequence of the will to power, as an accident that does not determine its essential core which is simply the overcoming of resistance. Accordingly, Reginster concludes that 'it would be a mistake to see in those common and perhaps *necessary* consequences of the pursuit of power its very essence' (Reginster, 2006: 139; my italics). But to admit that domination and exploitation are 'natural and frequent consequences' is different from recognizing them as 'common and perhaps *necessary* consequences'. These are distinct types of consequences, a distinction that accords with the Scholastic differentiation between *accidens necessarium* and *accidens contingens*. A necessary consequence is a necessary accident, and as such must be seen as constitutive of the essence of a thing. Reginster cannot say that a *necessary*, namely essential, consequence of the will to power like domination is not constitutive of its essence. But if he does, the formal/substantive distinction he had adopted collapses.

Would it be possible for Reginster to regain consistency by simply withdrawing his admittedly tepid recognition that domination is a *necessary* consequence of the will to power? Was it simply a mistake to make that admission? Is it possible to deny that domination is an *accidens necessarium* of the will to power? That one cannot deny this can be shown by Reginster's explanation of Nietzsche's account of the phenomenon of cruelty, defined as a first-order desire to inflict suffering on others. How does Nietzsche explain cruelty? How can one explain why we make others suffer? According to Reginster, we pursue cruelty for the sake of making others suffer. And making others suffer enhances our own feeling of power. Since it is possible to define power as the domination and control we exercise over others, cruelty may be explained by the desire to dominate others. Reginster rules this explanation out. The will to power must be defined not as first-order desire to dominate and control others, but as the formal overcoming of resistance. This is a better explanation of cruelty, because we do not experience an increase in the feeling of power if those we dominate do not oppose resistance:'Cruelty promises

such an increase because it promises resistance to overcome, namely, the will of the other, which necessarily rebels against the suffering inflicted upon it' (Reginster, 2006: 143). Reginster concludes how cruelty is 'best explained by the desire to overcome resistance' (Reginster, 2006: 146). He then asks, however, 'resistance to the achievement of what particular end?' (Reginster, 2006: 146). This is a strange question to ask, for it brings back the issue of domination that he had earlier dismissed. The purely formal conception of the will to power advanced by him made this question irrelevant. But now Reginster's answer confirms the suspicion that a purely formal approach is untenable; his answer is that those I act cruelly against will resist my aim to dominate and subjugate them. In other words, those whom I seek to dominate and control will see that the cruelty they suffer at my hands is motivated by my desire to dominate and subjugate them. Without my desire to dominate others, there is no motivation to exercise cruelty on them. This forces Reginster to recognize that Nietzsche did 'not clearly distinguish between the formal concept of power as the overcoming of resistance and a substantive concept of power as the domination of others. One could have the domination of others as a determinate end and also will the overcoming of resistance in the pursuit of this end' (Reginster, 2006: 146). This means that a clear distinction between essential and non-essential considerations of the will to power cannot be drawn. This also means that it is not possible to affirm a concept of power devoid of any determinate content, a purely formal second-order desire to overcome resistance. The clearest indication that Reginster's analytical reconstruction of Nietzsche's philosophy has reached its limits is his admission that 'cruelty cannot be explained *solely* by the desire to dominate others' (Reginster, 2006: 146). Since Reginster already admitted that cruelty is best explained by the formal desire to overcome resistance, his admission that cruelty *can* be explained by the first-order desire to dominate others confirms the view that Nietzsche's notion of will to power cannot be interpreted as devoid of any determinate content.

§4 If the will to power is the principle of Nietzsche's revaluation of values, it would not be inappropriate to characterize his morality as an ethics of command and obedience. One may then see it as one more manifestation of the desire to dominate, control and ultimately enslave others. If so, Kaufmann's first argument which seeks to reinterpret the will to power by shrinking its agency, and thus inoculate it against Nazi contamination, would prove to a large extent futile (cf. Detwiler, 1990: 39–44). This does not mean, as Kaufmann rightly points out, that one should depict Nietzsche as a rabidly

partisan figure waiting in line to plant his signature on the Party registry (cf. Kaufmann, 1968: 412). But an apolitical and systematic Nietzsche, cut off from his historical roots and offshoots of the German context, the 'Nietzsche in a vat' of contemporary analytic philosophy, is an arbitrary contraction that unnecessarily limits philosophical explications of his work.[79]

The intrinsic political significance of Nietzsche's work has been the theme of a number of recent books and collections of essays.[80] Nietzsche's antipathy to politics is acknowledged by Detwiler, who thinks this can be explained both by his 'thoroughgoing disgust with the modern "petty politics" that is desolating the German spirit' (Detwiler, 1990: 60) and his opposition to turn 'the state into a new idol' (Detwiler, 1990: 61). Undoubtedly there are identifiable political undertones in his exaltation of individuals who affirm their freedom. This betrays a conception of freedom that cannot be shared equally by all individuals. Nietzsche's aristocratic contempt for 'the herd' and his admiration for those who assert their eminence and distinguish themselves from the collectivity do not correspond to a society marked by the rise of liberal democracy. This was the basis for his disgust towards Bismarck's capitulation to the policies promoted by German social-democrats. Egalitarian movements were in his view decadent and ultimately nihilist.

Alexander Nehamas goes a step further. He acknowledges Nietzsche's advocacy of an aristocratic politics. In his view, the tragic heroes, the free spirits, the noble masters and the *Übermensch* are 'different versions of Nietzsche's effort to articulate what makes some human beings remarkable, distinguished, different from the rest of the world' (Nehamas, 2003: 92). The nobility of Nietzsche's heroes recognizes and demands certain duties, but duties that refer only to their peers. Those living outside the clannish aristocratic circles have no legitimate claims to make on their own and retain only an instrumental value. This view is clearly manifested in *BGE* §258: 'a good and healthy aristocracy … accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human being, to slaves, to instruments'. Nehamas thinks that Hitler, for example, may have lacked some of the qualities that defined the exemplar noble master that Nietzsche was aiming for. But Hitler most certainly possessed 'that faith in the dispensability and merely instrumental values of other' (Nehamas, 2003: 97), and was insensitive to the cruelty which Nietzsche defined as essential to the ethos of his noble individuals.

Equally futile is Kaufmann's second argument which denies normative value to Nietzsche's distinction between master and slave moralities.

Nietzsche's ethics of command and obedience sought to inculcate on aristocratic individuals the duty to command and exact obedience from subordinates. In 1921, Bruno Bauch, a well-known neo-Kantian philosopher who later became a Nazi collaborator, articulated the normative intent of Nietzsche's aristocratic ethics. Bauch's argument proceeded in two stages. First, he justified the abysmal distance posited by Nietzsche between social ranks as the result not of arrogant self-love but of the self-esteem higher individuals felt because of their readiness to assume 'great responsibilities' (Bauch, 1921: 10; cf. *BGE* §213). Aristocratic rule is essentially rule over oneself and is foreign to hedonist or self-seeking attitudes. In Bauch's view, 'the best rule over themselves because they show total dedication to their tasks' (Bauch, 1921: 11). Or, as Nietzsche put it, 'all the great artists have been great workers' (Bauch, 1921: 12; cf. *HH* §155). Toil, exertion, hardship in the realization of their tasks, was the moral imperative that guided the stoical forbearance of the highest human exemplars. Bauch, then, defined the tasks assigned by Nietzsche to those higher individuals: their aristocratic imperative demanded not only personal perfection but social fulfilment. Bauch maintained that the categories 'individual' and 'social' were 'reciprocal notions' – one could not conceive the individual without the social, and vice versa (Bauch, 1921: 4). The duty of any superior spirit was to become '*Führer* of the human totality' (Bauch, 1921: 13), or '*Führer* for the elevation of the type man' (Bauch, 1921: 12).[81] The morality of these masters did not imply arbitrariness or undisciplined self-seeking, but demanded that leaders reach beyond their aristocratic circles to make sure that society as a whole became an aristocratic social order.[82] The relation between leaders and followers, between those who command and those who obey, was what morally elevated humanity from a mere natural grouping to a cultural formation.

Nietzsche did not reject moral normativity per se but only prevailing morality, which he saw as a morality of decadence, incompatible with the standards of what he considered to be a healthy and elevated life. The morality that Nietzsche affirmed sought to revaluate, not devaluate, values. The content of this higher morality was the doctrine of rank order among individuals. 'My philosophy is directed at order of rank: not at an individualist morality' (*KSA* 12, 280; cf. *KSA* 11, 557f.). Nietzsche was neither a cognitive relativist nor an ethical nihilist whose aim was the destruction of all values. He rejected the prevailing liberal, enlightened ethos of his age, and at no point could his philosophy be identified with democratic or socialist values. He saw his task as a reinterpretation of all events and a reevaluation of all values. This could

explain why the Nazis saw themselves as the aristocratic masters, leaders in the struggle against democracy and socialism.

Kaufmann recognized that Nietzsche observed and described the 'contrast of those who have power and those who lack it', but that he did so as a sociological observer. In his view, 'it does not follow from Nietzsche's "vivisection" of slave-morality that he identifies his own position with that of masters' (Kaufmann, 1968: 297; 302). He thus denied normative value to Nietzsche's distinction between master and slave moralities. In a high-minded, though misguided, undertaking Kaufmann's anti-political interpretation tried to rescue Nietzsche from an embarrassing association with Nazism. The Nazis wrongly assumed that Nietzsche approved of masters, when in truth he meant that distinction 'to be descriptive' only (Kaufmann, 1968: 297). But when one interprets the morality of masters in Bauch's terms, as Nietzsche's aristocratic imperative to overrule modern democracy and socialism, its normative intent becomes evident. What Kaufmann failed to see is that Nietzsche's morality was normatively political. At its core one could find an aristocratic ethics of command and obedience.

The merit of Kaufmann and his legatees lies in their thorough philosophical analysis of Nietzsche's moral conception. Here, I have attempted to refute their philosophical arguments by pointing out their mistake in assuming that Nietzsche's moral conception refers solely to individual self-perfection and that his aristocratic ethics of command and obedience lacks normative intent. Political intentions guide Kaufmann and his followers into believing that, on the basis of Nietzsche's philosophical views, they can dispel suspicions that the radical right legitimately appropriated his views and was justified in claiming him as their precursor. It is true that Nietzsche bore no responsibility for the rise of fascist movements after the First World War, but the radical right was, to a certain extent, justified in claiming him as their precursor.[83]

In sum, the two aspects of Nietzsche's thought missed by Kaufmann – namely the political orientation of his ethics, and its normative bent – must be read against the background of the aristocratic ideal that Nietzsche owes to Homer and Theognis. In Nietzsche's view, an aristocratic society 'believes in a long scale of orders of rank and differences of worth between man and man, and needs slavery in some sense or other'. Such a society results from a 'constant exercise of obedience and command' and is responsible for the 'elevation of the type "man"' (*BGE* §257). It is a mistake to think that these descriptive accounts do not constitute a normative option. Nietzsche's abomination of democracy, egalitarianism and welfarism coincided with his

support for an aristocratic ethos; his aristocratic radicalism[84] should explain why the Nazis were to a certain extent justified in claiming him as their precursor. It is also a mistake to think that his aristocratic ideal refers solely to individual self-perfection and lacks a social dimension. According to Bruno Bauch, the individual and society stand in a reciprocal relationship, so that the individual cannot be conceived without the social, and vice versa (cf. Bauch, 1921: 4). The social dimension of Nietzsche's aristocratic ideal can explain why the Nazis could feel justified in claiming him as their paladin.[85]

§5 *Alles Lebendige ist ein Gehorchendes* (*ALG*) is a fifteen-page booklet containing thirty-five texts selected from the corpus of Nietzsche's work. Published in 1940, it appeared as part of the collection Münchner-Lesebogen issued in Munich by the Carl Gerber Verlag (Würzbach, 1940). The aim of these light and inexpensive mini volumes (more than a hundred of them were published from 1940 onwards) was to inspire patriotic sentiments among the German populace and bolster the war effort.[86] *ALG* was the third title of the collection. The title of the first one was *Goethe: Die Natur*, and of the second, which more clearly manifested the aim of the series, *Der Soldaten-Lehrbrief*. Other booklets contained selected readings by Schiller, Kant, Beethoven, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Frederick the Great and Novalis.[87]

At first sight, the purpose which inspired Friedrich Würzbach, the editor of *ALG*, was to convey to mobilized soldiers Nietzsche's thoughts on authority, discipline, leadership and order of rank.[88] Würzbach selected passages from the Nietzschean corpus that spoke of the relationship between commanders and followers, and more generally between command and obedience.[89] In one of them, Nietzsche connected the hard-working soldier and the scholar with the ethics of command and obedience. 'The same discipline makes both the soldier [*Militär*]and the scholar hard-working; and seen more closely, there is no hard-working scholar who does not have the instincts of a hard-working soldier in his body … What does one learn in a hard school? Obeying and commanding' (*KSA* 13, 14 [161]). Würzbach intended to highlight in this manner an aspect of Nietzsche's thought that catered to the military needs of the Nazi regime at that historical juncture. The publication of this booklet coincided with the onset of Hitler's war campaign in Europe. In this respect, Würzbach followed in the steps of those who, in 1914, had portrayed Nietzsche as 'the philosopher of the World War'. By now it was universally acknowledged that Nietzsche had taught Germans a lesson in heroism.[90] If

Germans showed 'contempt for death' and readiness to 'sacrifice in the altar of the whole', they owed this to Nietzsche (cf. Aschheim, 1992: 143).[91]

The *complexio oppositorum* 'command and obedience' was supposed to provide a conceptual foundation for the notion of aristocratic order of rank and related themes. *ALG* included one passage that well illustrated the internal relation that tied these notions together: 'To command and to obey is the fundamental fact: this presupposes an order of rank' (*KSA* 11, 26 [85], 171). Because of its strictly defined objective, Würzbach saw no need to convey to the readers any further theoretical, historical, biographical or ideological elaboration. Besides, by 1940 there could be no doubt that Nietzsche had been permanently 'incorporated into the Nazi pantheon of German giants' (Aschheim, 1992: 233).[92] This precluded any defence of his Nazi credentials.

Though himself not a member of the Nazi Party, Würzbach's own collaborationist credentials were well cemented. On 1 April 1933, Goebbels's Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda appointed Würzbach as director of cultural affairs for the German *Rundfunk* in Berlin.[93] In that capacity he was able to deliver talks on Nietzsche and other classical German literary figures.[94] In one of his first radio addresses, he quoted from *BGE* §263, where Nietzsche announces the coming of a 'new kind of philosopher and commander' to prepare for 'great enterprises and collective experiments in discipline and breeding' (Würzbach, 1933: 21–2). The example he had in mind was Mussolini, 'the great Italian *Führer*', who, by his own admission, was persuaded by Nietzsche to leave behind his democratic leanings to become a national *Führer* (Würzbach, 1933: 21). Mussolini aspired 'not after equality, but after the natural articulation [*Gliederung*] of his people'. According to Würzbach, Nietzsche in *BGE* §203 had announced not only the coming of Germany's *Führer* but also the 'birth of his millennial kingdom' (Würzbach, 1933: 22; cf. Zapata, 1995: 100).[95]

The texts selected by Würzbach for *ALG* were presented in the form of a breviary or prayer book, evidence that his aim was inspirational and evocative, and not argumentative. The terse preface that Würzbach wrote for it gave the briefest account of the general orientation of Nietzsche's thought.[96] He did not mention the war, the Nazi party or Hitler's leadership. Neither did he make any effort to define in advance the criterion which guided the selection of the texts or to explain their thematic unity. The title chosen, *Alles Lebendige ist ein Gehorchendes*, came from a passage taken from *Z*, and was meant to convey the centrality of the notions of command and obedience in Nietzsche's political thought. On reading *ALG*, soldiers at the front, and their commanding

officers,[97] would be inspired to obey the orders issued by their *Führer*. Würzbach must have thought that reference to Nietzsche's prestige as a leading moral figure could only bolster Hitler's leadership in those difficult times. This had been his goal since he began his collaboration in 1933. For their part, the Nazis and their propaganda machine must have looked favourably on Würzbach's activities, a scholarly figure who was the President of the *Nietzsche Gesellschaft* and had been co-editor of the Musarion edition of Nietzsche's works (cf. Nietzsche, 1920–9; also Würzbach, 1922, 1926, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1935, 1942, 1943). *ALG* should be seen as one more instance of that collaboration.[98]

Würzbach thought he could find echoes of the theme 'command and obedience' in Hitler's speeches and in *Mein Kampf*. In 1943, in his book *Die Quellen unserer Kraft. Ein Lesebuch von Ewig Deutschen*, he published a selection of his own radio addresses for the Munich *Rundkfunk*. In a postcript to the book, Würzbach acknowledged the inclusion of a number of 'important remarks by the Führer' taken from *Mein Kampf* and his addresses to the Party (Würzbach and Kroekel, 1943: 439). For instance, the epigraph to chapter 17, titled *Führen und Folgen*,[99] was a compilation of Hitler's thoughts on this subject in which the Führer included a citation from Nietzsche's *Z*:

> Every community that showed stability was structured in terms of leadership and those who followed. This idea that it is better that one command and the rest obey was valid universally, whether the leader was a chieftain, a duke, a king or an emperor. This striving for order rules even in the animal kingdom, so that Nietzsche could say: 'But wherever I found living things, there heard I also the language of obedience' [*Z* II, 12]. It did not mean much that in the course of time singular nations exercised different forms leadership, or that from time to time they tried to overthrow their leadership, for as soon as those nations faced danger and felt menaced, leadership and followers became the highest and strongest law. All knew that without a leader it was impossible to attain victory and remain firm. (Würzbach and Kroekel, 1943: 136; cf. Montinari, 1996: 71–2)

To confirm the link with Nietzsche, Würzbach then added the full paragraph from *Z* (Würzbach and Kroekel, 1943: 136). One should note that immediately after writing: 'But wherever I found living things, there heard I also the language of obedience', Nietzsche wrote: '*Alles Lebedinge ist ein Gehorchendes*'. Würzbach's decision to use this phrase as title for the booklet he would dispatch to the front may be read as implying Hitler's *Imprimatur*.

In view of this, one could say that no more than perfunctory attention ought to be given to a stereotyped document like *ALG*, which has received no notice at all, scholarly or otherwise, a booklet patently partisan in form and content, and extraneous to Nietzsche's philosophical intentions. There seems to be no good reason, aside from its value as an historical oddity, to refer to a document

authored by a committed Nazi collaborator. It should be patently clear that Würzbach misused Nietzsche‘s thought to further the interests of Hitler’s leadership, and misdirected his moral concerns to bolster the morale of the Wehrmacht.

This is a serious argument against my use of *ALG* to confirm my objections to Kaufmann’s anti-political reading of the will to power and his refusal to attribute normative intent to Nietzsche’s distinction between master and slave moralities. There are two reasons that make me disregard that objection. First, Würzbach brings to the fore the notions of command and obedience, and order of rank, which are internally related to Nietzsche’s notion of will to power. This relation is explicitly affirmed by Nietzsche in *Z* II, 12, prominently displayed in *ALG*. If the will to power is the principle of Nietzsche’s revaluation of morality, it would not be inappropriate to characterize it as espousing an ethics of command and obedience, and see in it one more manifestation of the desire to subordinate others by dominating and controlling them. Second, Würzbach prefaced *ALG* with an ultra-condensed paragraph that accurately captured the main drift of Nietzsche’s immoralism. This paragraph was all Würzbach thought was needed in order to give his readership an account of the essential Nietzsche. It contained no explicit reference to the Nazi movement or its ideology, but reflected the conservative defence of Nietzsche advanced by Würzbach in 1919 when he, together with Thomas Mann, Ernst Bertram, Hugo von Hoffmanstahl, Richard Oehler and other aristocratizing literary figures, founded the *Nietzsche Gesellschaft* in Munich (cf. Vogel, 2007). This group of right-wing Nietzscheans ‘extolled ultra-patrician values and poses, thereby reflecting and advancing the rediscovery and reaffirmation of the merits and necessities of elitism’ during Weimar period (Mayer, 1981: 293). In 1921, Richard Oehler edited a book containing contributions by members of the *Nietzsche Gesellschaft*, which also included an article by Bruno Bauch. Bauch’s article articulated philosophically the aristocratic convictions espoused by the *Nietzsche Gesellschaft*.

Würzbach’s preface to *ALG* manifested the same aristocratic ethos described by Bauch. Noting Nietzsche’s ambivalent conception of morality, Würzbach pointed out that what Nietzsche rejected was prevailing morality, a morality of decadence incompatible with the standards of an ‘healthy and elevated life’ (*ALG* Preface).Würzbach also thought that the Nietzschean morality was ‘a stronger, strenuous morality’, one that sought to ‘re-valuate, not devaluate, values’ (*ALG* Preface). The content of this higher morality was ‘the doctrine of the order of rank among individuals’ (*ALG* Preface). Nietzsche was neither a cognitive relativist nor an ethical nihilist. In Würzbach’s view, Nietzsche

rejected the dominant liberal, enlightened ethos of an age that proclaimed: 'Nothing is true, everything is allowed!' (*ALG* Preface). For Nietzsche, 'prevailing morality validated feeble, decadent life, while regarding healthy and elevated life as an enemy' (*ALG* Preface). At no point could Nietzsche's philosophy be identified with democratic or socialist values. Nor could he be declared a nihilist whose aim was the destruction of all values. On the contrary, 'his task was to re-interpret all events and re-evaluate – not devaluate – all values' (*ALG* Preface).[100] Würzbach thought that Nietzsche's aristocratic ethos was fully embraced by the Nazis. To close the circle, the Nazis were persuaded by Nietzscheans like Würzbach to see themselves as Nietzsche's aristocratic masters, leaders in the struggle against democracy and socialism.

Kaufmann acknowledged that Nietzsche distinguished between master and slave moralities, but that he did so as a scientific observer who did not espouse or recommend what he described. He thus denied normative value to Nietzsche's distinction between master and slave moralities. But once the morality of masters was interpreted, in Bauch's terms, as Nietzsche's aristocratic imperative to overrule modern democracy and socialism, its normative intent became evident. Würzbach's booklet illustrates what Kaufmann failed to see, that Nietzsche's morality was normatively political. At its core, one could find an aristocratic ethics of command and obedience.[101]

III. Nietzsche's Aristocratic Radicalism: Charismatic Authority

Postmodern Nietzsche readings emphasize his aversion to authority and all kinds of fixed orders and hierarchies (cf. Knoll and Stocker, 2014: 19–23). He is interpreted as seeking to deconstruct the metaphysical foundations of authority and devoted mainly to personal emancipation and individual self-creation. For Michel Foucault, Nietzsche is the precursor of a philosophy of disparity, dispersion and difference, a philosophy that undermines unity and stability, ontological bulwarks that support the claims of authority. Nietzschean genealogy, according to Foucault, 'disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified' (Foucault, 1984: 82). The historical sense proper to genealogy dissolves the metaphysical and supra-historical; it consists of 'the acuity of a glance that distinguishes, separates, and disperses … – the kind of dissociating view … capable of shattering the unity of man's being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to the events of the past' (Foucault, 1984: 87). Nietzsche

privileged freedom understood as change and diffusion, and dissolved the unity and stability imposed by authority. Alan Schrift, in agreement with Foucault, writes that the 'question of authority and its legitimation is a central issue in Nietzsche's writings … Whether he is dismantling the authority of the moral-theological tradition, deconstructing the authority of God, or excising the hidden metaphysical authority within language, Nietzsche's refusal to legitimate any figure of authority remains constant' (Schrift, 2008: 1).[102] Similarly, Richard Rorty associates Nietzsche with Kierkegaard, Baudelaire and Proust, and considers him to be an exemplary liberal ironist (Rorty, 1989: xiv). He acknowledges that Nietzsche sponsored a determinate political vision which is 'clearly anti-liberal'. But his anti-liberalism was 'adventitious and idiosyncratic', and his ideal of self-creativity did not translate into social policy (Rorty, 1989: 99). Nietzsche, a free spirit, preaches abstention from politics and utopian individualism.

The most poignant manifestation of Nietzsche's refusal to legitimate authority was his abomination of the state as universal guarantor of security and welfare. His *cri de cœur* was 'the least possible state' (*HH*, §473; *A*, §179; cf. Lotter, 2008). Any form of public intervention he considered to be a grievous hindrance to the full development of creative individualities. No social or institutional imperative should hamper human creativity. Nietzsche's (anti)metaphysical intuitions confirmed this avowal of individual creative autonomy. He rejected what he perceived as the authoritarianism of a metaphysics based on the notions of 'unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, thinghood, being' (*TI*, III 5). As a protection against authoritarian collectivism, his epistemology was nominalist and did away with the notion of truth as discovery (cf. *KSA* 1, 878–81). Only perspectivism would ensure social pluralism as a safeguard against state centralization.[103] Antiauthoritarianism is possibly the most prominent of the attributes postmodernism confers on Nietzsche. As Peter Berkowitz notes, 'exaltation of the creative will instills an indiscriminate contempt for authority' (Berkowitz, 1995: 269).

Additionally, Nietzsche's antipathy towards politics is seen as a confirmation of his rejection of state authority. In *SE*, he wrote: 'for he who loves the *furor philosophicus* will have no time for the *furor politicus*' (*SE* §7). Many commentators deny the political orientation of his thought.[104] Thomas H. Brobjer observes that Nietzsche 'very rarely speaks explicitly of politics' (Brobjer, 1998: 301) and, according to Schrift, Nietzsche 'seemed to be almost entirely disinterested in politics' (Schrift, 2000: 221).[105] More appropriately Bruce Detwiler interprets this antipathy as determined by a 'thoroughgoing

disgust with the modern "petty politics" that [desolates] the German spirit', and by his opposition to turn 'the state into a new idol' (Detwiler, 1990: 60–1). Nietzsche's refusal actively to participate in contingent politics matches his distrust of the modern state, which he sees as an impediment for the development of culture. Only an instrumental approach to politics made sense to him (Detwiler, 1990: 66; cf. Conway, 2008: 38).

I would like to challenge this anti-authoritarian understanding of Nietzsche and show that his refusal to grant legitimacy to the state referred only to the modern liberal democratic state. He was critical of the formal normative authority demanded by the latter, an authority based on antecedent consensus. In contrast, he granted legitimacy to non-formal juridical authority, either traditional or charismatic – the authority held by the aristocratic states of antiquity which privileged order of rank, or by charismatic commanders like Caesar and Napoleon. I discuss this issue in three distinct moments of Nietzsche's intellectual development. (1) In his early work (1862– 74), Nietzsche assigned an instrumental role to the state, in as much as it facilitated the procreation of the artistic genius. This aim could only be attained by the Olympian existence of an aristocracy bolstered by the enforcement of slave labour. This was most evident in his *GSt* essay, where Nietzsche recognized the 'enormous necessity of the state' (*KSA* I, 770). The Greek state, specifically the Dorian state, based its authority on a natural order of rank which included the natural subordination of slaves – a necessary condition for the development of an aristocratic culture. This is directly at odds with the liberal notion of state authority. Liberalism does not see authority as naturally given, but as something that is normatively grounded on an antecedent social contract or consensus. Consent is necessary due to the liberal claim that the equality among individuals is natural. In contrast, Nietzsche believed in natural inequality and allowed authority to rest on natural hierarchies. Nietzsche's anti-liberalism was already visible in his early essay of 1862, where he celebrated Napoleon III and the monarchical principle to the detriment of republicanism and liberal constitutionalism. Proof of this was his assent to Louis Napoleon's assertion: 'I deviated from the path of legality [*Gesetzlichkeit, la légalité*] only in order to enter the path of law [*Recht, le droit*]' (Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 28; Nietzsche, 1862: 56; Menzel, 1857: II, 407). In *DTM*, Nietzsche shared Theognis' nostalgia for the demise of the Megarian state which had rested on the traditional authority claimed by the aristocracy. (2) In *HH*, Nietzsche determined that the notion of natural subordination was the original foundation of authority. Natural subordination was justified by religion, which was most effective when, as he showed in

DTM, the administration of sacred rites remained the exclusive domain of the nobility. The triumph of liberal equality severed all links with religion and hierarchical conceptions. Natural subordination disappeared, together with its foundation belief 'in unconditional authority, in definitive truth' (§441). Loss of legitimacy marked the beginning of state extinction. What Nietzsche feared most were the revolutionary upheavals that would follow such extinction, and was willing to compromise with democracy to delay that eventuality. At the same time, he supported Bismarck's promulgation of anti-socialist legislation in 1878. (3) In 1881, a change took place in his argumentative strategy when he realized that the failure of the anti-socialist legislation had led Bismarck to promulgate welfare policies that further eroded aristocratic authority. Nietzsche now argued that the worst adversary of state authority was democracy. This was the point of departure of his campaign against current morality, which he blamed for the growth and consolidation of democracy.[106] With respect to the authority of the state, Nietzsche's argumentative strategy had a dual aspect: he rejected the attempt by liberal contractualism normatively to ground the legitimacy of the state in a social contract, and at the same time he defended the non-normative legitimacy of non-liberal authorities, both charismatic figures and the authority of tradition.

I conclude with a discussion of contemporary efforts to defend Nietzsche as a democratic thinker. Lawrence Hatab acknowledges the existence of a political language in Nietzsche that is suggestive of aristocratic and authoritarian convictions. At the same time, Hatab affirms the possibility of using Nietzsche's thought to promote democratic politics. Nietzsche agonism, his critique of essentialism and his perspectivism may be used to overcome levelling practices that result from the modern democratic experience. I argue first of all that Hatab does not consider Nietzsche's radical aristocratism and, secondly, that Nietzsche's aristocratism is not purely cultural and must be seen as extended to the political sphere. In my view, it is possible conceptually to distinguish, but not really to separate the realms of the cultural and the political.

§1 On 24 September 1862, when Bismarck became Prime Minister of Prussia, Nietzsche was seventeen years old. Twenty six years later, on 3 January 1889, when he collapsed on the streets of Turin, Bismarck was still Germany's Iron Chancellor. Nietzsche's adult life coincided with the duration of that regime and was preeminently determined by the culture and political conceptions current during the Bismarckian era. Nietzsche's interest in his political context

was already in evidence during his years at Pforta when he lauded the victory of Cavaignac over the socialists, 'of the monarchical principle[107] over the republic' (Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 27). Nietzsche privileged the charismatic authority exercised by concrete individuals as opposed to the liberal democratic rule of abstract normativity. Accordingly, in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (*PTG*) he praised the Greeks for whom 'what is more abstract coalesces into a person', as opposed to the moderns, for whom 'the most personal sublimates into an abstraction' (*KSA* 1, 815; cf. Bertram, 2009: 171). He would then entrust to the hands of a charismatic leader the creation of a new aristocracy that would recreate and give new life to traditional authority.

BT and *UM* have been interpreted as engaging in a 'fierce attack' against the state, a 'motif that remains characteristic of all of Nietzsche's works' (Kaufmann, 1950: 123). Nietzsche proclaimed in *BT*'s dedication to Wagner that art is the 'most elevated task and true metaphysical activity' (*BT*, Preface). At the same time, he declared that he saw no opposition between 'aesthetic indulgence' and 'patriotic enthusiasm' (*BT*, Preface). This is significant for it constitutes an acknowledgement that the book did not have a purely contemplative intent. Nietzsche pondered on 'a serious German problem … a problem that lies at the very center of German hopes' (*BT*, Preface).[108] He believed that Germany needed a cultural rebirth and was confident that this could be attained. This was the historical context that made it urgent to address aesthetic issues. Beneath the present artificial and decadent German culture, Nietzsche discerned 'the noble heart of popular culture … an immemorial, majestic and internally healthy force' (*BT* §23). Later in 1886, in the prologue for a new edition of *BT*, Nietzsche acknowledged its optimistic spirit, but admitted that he had placed his hopes where there was nothing to hope for. Germany, 'which had recently demonstrated a will to rule Europe and also the strength to rule over it', had given up on this task and found itself at that point in a process of 'transition towards mediocrity, democracy and other modern ideas' (*BT*, Prologue §6). This observation signals the direction of Nietzsche's attack on the modern state. He saw parliamentary democracy on the rise in Germany, and this meant a weakening of the authority of the executive state. In turn, this constituted a grave impediment for the advancement of aristocratic culture. Culture, he acknowledged in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, is 'fairly independent of the welfare of the state' (*SE* §4) and constitutes the highest goal of humankind. A well-ordered state is one which places itself at the service of culture and does not step beyond this ancillary role. It is clear that Nietzsche

was not critical of a state that advanced culture. His attack was directed against a conception of the state which regarded itself as 'the highest goal of humankind' and which affirmed that a human being 'has no higher duty than to serve the state' (*SE* §4).

Confirmation of this view is found in *GSt*, an essay originally intended to be included in *BT*. Nietzsche in *GSt* postulated that two essential modern ideas, the dignity of human beings and the dignity of labour, distinguished it from classical culture. The Greeks were able to develop a superior culture by exploiting slave labour; this was then, and continues to be now, a necessary condition for the growth of a superior culture: 'The misery of workers must increase to make it possible for a small number of Olympic men to generate the world of art' (*KSA* 1, 767). The democratic state, grounded in popular consent, could not aspire to develop a true culture and assume an authentic cultural task, which Nietzsche defined as the breeding of superior human specimens. An aristocratic state was required for that purpose, a state whose matrix was either a natural order of rank or a superhuman executive authority, a figure of superhuman proportions that granted legitimacy to state authority.[109] Such was the Greek state, which Nietzsche saw as the 'iron clamp' that allowed society to transcend its natural condition, the *bellum omnium contra omnes* (*KSA* 1, 769).

When Nietzsche wrote about the Greek state, he had the Dorian state in mind and not the Ionian state or other classical configurations. His conception of the state was not abstract and ahistorical; his Pforta dissertation shows how the structure of his argument depended on the knowledge of history. The aim of his dissertation was a refutation of Welcker's view of Theognis as a gnomic poet. He did so by situating the poet in his historical context. Nietzsche wrote: 'when I read Theognis, nowhere do I find gnomic poetry, though I am ready to grant that anyone who approaches Theognis without being educated in the knowledge of history will think he has found something similar to the proverbs of Solomon, with which Julian [the Apostate] actually did compare the *Theognidea*' (*DTM*, 143). Nietzsche's education in the knowledge of history explains his familiarity with Müller's *Die Dorier*. In this book, Germans conservatives contemplated the paradigm model for the strong aristocratic state they sought to consolidate in Prussia. Müller contrasted the Dorian state to the modern state which he saw as 'an institution for protecting the persons and property of the individuals contained in it' (Müller, 1839: II, 1). The Dorian state was not a mere instrument that served the separate interests of individuals, but a 'whole body', a unified 'moral agent … produced by the ties

of some natural affinity' (Müller, 1839: II, 1). In Sparta, one could see that 'the plurality of the persons composing the state was most completely reduced to a unity' (Müller, 1839: II, 2). While Spartans considered themselves free as a result of being integral parts of the body of the state, modern individuals sought to have 'the fewest possible claims from the community' (Müller, 1839: II, 2). The Ionian states deviated from the Dorian paradigm and could be said to prefigure the modern situation. In Ionian states, 'the opinions of individuals … outweighed the authority of the whole' (Müller, 1839: II, 3), and were prone to evolve, change and ultimately disintegrate. This was clearly a projection of views current in Germany at the time.[110] Müller drew the stark difference between Dorians and Ionians as follows:

> The former had … the greatest veneration for antiquity; and not to degenerate from his ancestors was the strongest exhortation which a Spartan could hear; the latter, on the other hand, were in everything fond of novelty, and delighted in foreign communication; whence their cities were always built on the sea, whereas the Dorians generally preferred an inland situation. (Müller, 1839: II, 3–4)

Despite these differences, all Greek states derived from what Müller referred to as 'the constitution of the heroic age' (Müller, 1839: II, 6). As described by Homer, that constitution was aristocratic in the sense that its most important feature was 'the accurate division between the nobles and the people' (Müller, 1839: II, 6). Müller acknowledged that around the year 660, increased trade and commerce determined that 'the value of wealth rose in comparison with the honour of noble descent', so that later on Theognis could denounce the influx of newly created wealth as the source of Megara's social disruption. Only Sparta was spared from this turmoil because of the stability of its institutions (Müller, 1839: II, 7–8; cf. Bernhardy, 1877: 524–5; Porter, 2000: 233–5). Nietzsche embraced the Dorian archaic ideals extolled by Müller, and disparaged Ionian culture.[111]

When Nietzsche turned his attention to his own political milieu, he perceived a dangerously atrophied state. This coincided with a loss of a 'state instinct' (*Staatstendenz*) on the part of individuals, who, as a result, attributed value to it only 'when it coincide[d] with their own interest' (*KSA* 1, 772). The aim that guided them was the freedom to pursue their own ends without state interference. They promoted 'the politics of their convenience' (*KSA* 1, 772–3) and it was inconceivable that 'they could sacrifice themselves in favour of a state instinct when they lack[ed] that instinct' (*KSA* 1, 773). Individuals sought protection for their own projects; they longed for peace and avoidance of war. This they secured by the dissemination of 'a liberal, optimistic view of the world, that ha[d] its roots in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, in a

philosophy that is un-German, genuinely Latin, superficial and devoid of metaphysics' (*KSA* 1, 773). The antidote to prevent the state instinct from becoming a money instinct was 'war, always war' (*KSA* 1, 774). War revealed the true essence of the state for it contributed to draw strict hierarchical lines of command and obedience, typical of a 'belligerent society' in whose apex one could find 'the military genius … the original founder of the state' (*KSA* 1, 775). Everything else became a docile instrument at the service of the aims set by the military genius. The obedience demanded by the military commanders was the reason why the dignity of human beings and the dignity of labour could find no place in a well-constituted state.

The goal, then, was the preservation and advancement of aristocratism. Only aristocratic culture possessed intrinsic value; everything else could only claim to have instrumental value. 'The proper aim of the State [is] the Olympian existence and ever-renewed procreation and preparation of the genius, compared with which all other things are only tools, expedients and factors towards realization' (*KSA* 1, 776).[112] Slaves were instruments par excellence and a society that appreciated culture was necessarily a slave society. Such a society required a state that espoused an ethics of command and obedience. The state ought to remain in the service of an aristocratic society and culture, and serve as an 'iron clamp' to establish and preserve the institution of slavery. In contrast, the modern state has been demeaned by democratic liberals who urge 'the emancipation of the masses from the rule of great individuals', and seek to dismantle the most sacred order, namely 'the servitude of the masses, their subservient obedience' (*KSA* 1, 698).[113]

§2 In May 1878, Nietzsche published *HH* which he dedicated to Voltaire. He distanced himself from Wagner's attempt to renew German culture and attempted reconciliation with Enlightenment ideals. He distinguished these ideals from those that guided the French Revolution, favouring Voltaire's moderation and rejecting Rousseau's radicalism. Nietzsche thought that 'the revolution energizes the most savage energies' and could not be 'regulator, architect, artist and enrich human nature' (*HH* §463).

In an extensive section titled *Religion and Government* (*HH* §472), Nietzsche analysed the decline and fall of the modern state. This development, determined by the relation between the state and religion, had two stages. Initially, the state maintained a close internal relationship with religion. One determinate social class took custody of the state and used religion as a form of legitimation: 'As Napoleon understood it, without the help of priests no power

may be "legitimate" (*legitim*)' (*HH* §472). The second stage in this development takes place when religion is perceived as a mere instrument of legitimation. This is typical of liberal regimes where religion ceases to be public or civic, and turns into a purely private affair. Religious pluralism, a consequence of privatization, gives rise to numberless conflicts. Without the unity secured by the state, multiple religious manifestations, previously repressed, ascend to the surface and generate sectarian conflicts. To face this situation, rulers adopt a hostile attitude towards religion. At the same time, those who take religion seriously adopt a hostile attitude towards the state. The transitional conflicts that ensue further erode the authority of the state which is no longer perceived as a 'transcendent [*überweltliche*] institution' (*HH* §472). Among other things, it cannot guarantee compliance for its own commands. Individuals do not feel obligated to obey the laws and majoritarian politics turns to be deciding factor: 'Private enterprises come into action and absorb the functions discharged by the state' (*HH* §472). The most essential of state functions, namely the protection of persons, is privatized, and this, more than anything else, accelerates the death of the state.[114]

Nietzsche summarized these stages of the process of state extinction. He asserted that the state could sustain itself only if its interests were to coincide with those of religion. Once that identity vanished the foundations that sustained state legitimacy would collapse: 'When religion evaporates the state inevitably loses its ancient veil of Isis and ceases to inspire reverence' (*HH* §472). This process of secularization was spearheaded by democracy, by the sovereignty of the people. When divine authority is successfully challenged by the sovereignty of the people the dissolution of state authority follows. But secularization does not end here. There may be an intermediary stage that may delay the extinction of the state and the rise of revolutionary chaos. Hoping that this stage can take effect, Nietzsche concludes with an exhortation that reveals how much he loathed the politics of revolution: 'Let us trust the prudence and the self-interest of individuals who seek to prolong the existence of the state for a while and reject the destructive experiments of impatient and fanatical dilettantes' (*HH* §472). Nietzsche's hostility was not directed against the state per se, but only against bureaucratic, administrative states legitimated by a contrived normativity.[115]

In 1878, with rising tension in Germany, Bismarck feared a social explosion similar to the Paris Commune. This accounts for the passage of his anti-socialist legislation on 19 October of that year. Nietzsche supported these emergency measures. In the summer of 1879, after resigning his position at

Basel, he wrote *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (*WS*) where he charged the Revolution with setting 'the Enlightenment on its fanatical head'. The Enlightenment, which was 'so alien to the Revolution', had now become 'violent and impulsive'. The essential task was to cleanse it from this 'impurity' and 'strangle the Revolution at birth' (*WS* §221). Nietzsche understood that he was to proceed with caution. He announced his decision to remain in seclusion, 'to withdraw into concealment', not just because of his reticence to participate in politics, but also strategically as a way to accumulate a capital of ideas with which to confront these 'very dangerous times' (*WS* §229). Strategic was also his qualified acceptance of democracy. The democratization of Europe was now 'irresistible' and could serve as prophylaxis against revolutionary upsurges. Nietzsche appealed to democracy as a way to protect the 'orchards of culture' that could be 'destroyed overnight by wild and senseless torrents' (*WS* §275).

§3 Bismarck soon realized that his anti-socialist legislation was not successful and decided to modify his strategy. In November 1881, he reached a compromise with the socialist movement by inaugurating policies conducive to a welfare state. In *GS*, Nietzsche opposed these concessions and radicalized his rejection of the discourse of equality and social security. He considered that the European situation was moving in the direction of China where, for millennia, life had gone on without disruption and with no desire for change (*GS* §24). In *D*, Nietzsche recognized, in the 'fashionable morality' of the day, the importance that was given to 'sympathy for others' and the urge to 'distance life from any danger' (*D* §174). Christian altruism fed the growth of socialism. What was most perilous was the 'development of rationality, of greed, of the desire for independence', in one word of the eclosion of 'the individual' (*D* §173). This was the point of departure, as Nietzsche would acknowledge later in *EH*, of his 'campaign against morality' (*EH*, *A*I) and marked the beginning of his despair on the possibility of restoring an aristocratic state. Bismarck's capitulation in the face of socialism made it evident that the liberal contractual state was not an appropriate vehicle to foster an aristocratic hegemony. Bismarck's state had succumbed to the Christian imperatives inherited by socialism.

Nietzsche blamed socialism for undermining the foundations of a healthy ethics of entrepreneurship. The captains of industry no longer sought to cultivate and heighten their superiority, and had lost their noble manners. Military society yielded to an industrial society which shunned the ethics of command and obedience. Present-day workers understandably saw their

bosses as ‘clever, bloodsucking dogs, who exploit their needs, and whose name, figure, habits and reputation are indifferent to them’ (*GS* §40). To be able to command subordinates, capitalists ought to cultivate a charismatic bearing; only then would they be exempted from justifying their ascendancy; only then would workers make of obedience an ingrained habit. The oriental temperament, contemplative and phlegmatic, was not advisable for the development of an entrepreneurial ethics. Still, Nietzsche recommended the immigration of Chinese workers because of their pre-disposition towards obedience and a lifestyle similar to ‘industrious ants’ (*D* §206).

Nietzsche trumpeted his new morality as one that exalted command and obedience, a morality of manliness more appropriate to belligerent times. He noticed that ‘the emotion of commanding is a decisive sign of force and self-sovereignty’ (*GS* §347). Those who ignored how to command ‘wish for someone who can command, who commands with severity – a god, a prince, a class, a physician, a confessor, a dogma, a party’ (*GS* §347). Future commanders will make a habit of commanding and they will exercise it with aplomb. They will also be disposed to obey their peers, but will do so with the same arrogance they exhibit as commanders (*GS* §40). Each member of the dominant elite was to be seen as an autonomous individual, but it was clear that Nietzsche thought that the leadership of this aristocratic minority would be self-ruled by an ethics of command and obedience. This was an impossible task within an industrial and mercantile world, because its commanders, even if they assumed an aristocratic stance, lacked ‘the nobility of obedience’ (*HH* §440). To obey nobly and in dignified fashion occurs within aristocratic families. This was something one inherited from one’s feudal ancestry and could no longer ‘flourish in our cultural climate’ (*HH* §440).

These texts addressed a select audience and were not normatively guided by democratic, universalist imperatives. Nietzsche refused to require the state to guarantee universal security and welfare. His sole interest was the creation of the cultural conditions for breeding new aristocrats, who would only need to cultivate a ‘disposition to command’, and also obey when required to do so (*GS* §283). These ‘valiant precursors’ would be ready for war and ‘honour heroism again’ (*GS* §283). Nietzsche recommended that they live dangerously: ‘Build your cities on the slope of Mt Vesubius! Send you ships to unknown seas! Conduct war against your peers and against yourselves!’ (*GS* §283). He admired the architecture, opulent and autocratic, of the mansions and villas built on the heights of Genoa: ‘The whole district distills that splendid and insatiable selfishness typical of the desire to possess and exploit’ (*GS* §291). In Germany, the building of cities laid bare the existence ‘of laws, and a

generalized delight in legality and obedience' (*GS* §291). German architects were ruled 'by the propensity to equality and submission' (*GS* §291). In a fragment of 1885 he declared that modern morality hindered the breeding of 'men of colossal creativity'. Morality now desired 'a happiness of green meadows on earth, a morality that yearns for security, the absence of danger, tranquility and a lightness of being': most of all, a morality that shunned 'every type of shepherd and leader' (*KSA* 11, 37 [8]).

In *Z*, Nietzsche breathed new life onto his campaign in favour of new aristocratic morality. In the chapter 'On Self-Overcoming', he based the patrician ethics of command and obedience on the notion of the will to power.

> Wherever I found living beings, I have also heard the language of obedience. Every living thing obeys [*Alles Lebendige ist ein Gehorchendes*].
>
> And this is what I heard next: whoever does not obey himself shall be commanded. Such is the nature of living beings.
>
> Thirdly, I heard that to command is more onerous than obeying … Wherever I found living beings I have also found the will to power; even in the will of the servant I have found the master.
>
> (*Z*, II 'On Self-Overcoming')

One may obey or disobey the commands of the will to power. Those who disobey will end up being commanded, and those who obey will be commanders. The will to power is not merely a drive for selftranscendence in pursuit of self-perfection; it also articulates an interpersonal relationship that involves command and obedience.[116] Commanders and their subordinates obeyed the will of power that transcended them.

The ethics of command and obedience demanded by the will to power was essentially aristocratic, for it determined a hierarchical inequality between commanders and their subordinates. In the chapter 'On the tarantulas', Nietzsche pointed to Bismarck as one who surrendered before 'the preachers of equality', full of envy, jealousy and revenge. His response in the name of justice was that 'human beings are not equal', and this nourished his own 'love for the *Übermensch*' and life's desire to 'transcend itself' (*Z*, II 'On the tarantulas'). In the chapter 'On old and new tablets', Nietzsche lamented the lack of remembrance. The crowd has no sense of history; for them time ceases with their grandparents. The day will come when the crowd becomes master 'and drown all time in shallow water'. Therefore, 'a new nobility is needed,

which shall be the adversary of all rabble and despot rule' (*Z*, III 'On old and new tablets', §11). He rejected both democracy and Bismarck's surrender to the demands of democrats and socialists. The new aristocracy would look towards the future when nobody would be able 'to buy it … with merchant's gold' (*Z*, III 'On old and new tablets', §12). These new nobles would be genuine commanders. Their quest would be: 'Who can command, who must obey …'. And then he added: 'Human society: this is a quest … it seeks the commander … and not a contract' (*Z*, III 'On old and new tablets', §25).

Christian morality cleared the way for the rise of liberal egalitarianism and the social contract, which Nietzsche was to turn into a morality of 'opposed intentions'. In a fragment dating from 1885, Nietzsche describes the way in which this opposed morality 'will discipline individuals in order to ascend heights, and not for comfort and mediocrity'. This will be 'a morality that will breed a leading caste – the future masters of the earth' (*KSA* 11, 37 [8]). Nietzsche refined his aristocratic vision, characterized by a hierarchical order, class differentials and the ethics of command and obedience. In *BGE*, Nietzsche noted that the legendary strength and inventiveness of the European aristocracy had been weakened by the 'profound averageness' of the English people. He observed that 'European vulgarity' and the 'plebeianism of modern ideas' were the 'work and invention' of England (*BGE*, §253). Traditionally, the British parliamentary model allowed aristocratic rule to coexist with democratic institutions. To this 'parliamentary imbecility' (*BGE*, §208), Nietzsche opposed his radical aristocratic proposal defined by his ethics of command and obedience. His aristocratic commanders would demand 'critical discipline and every habit conducive to cleanliness and severity in the things of the spirit' (*BGE*, §210). They would constitute an 'aristocracy of peers who are used to ruling jointly and understand how to command' (*KSA* 40 [42]).

In the *GM*, Nietzsche revisited the theme of the birth of the state in terms similar to those used in *GSt*. The state was born as a 'terrible tyranny', as an 'oppressive and pitiless machine' (*GM*, II, 17). A dominant group, 'a pack of blond beasts of prey', hurled itself on a nomadic, disorganized multitude, and impressed on it a state form which was no more than naked exploitation.[117] How can we talk here of state authority? Are we not in the presence of the arbitrary imposition of a will to power, of the robber who points his gun at me and demands my money? One has to take into account that Nietzsche was considering only the birth of the state and not its subsequent evolution. Once the state began to function properly, as he observed in *GSt*, it had to adhere to criteria of legitimacy. The authority of the state was legitimate when it

submitted to a higher, normatively autonomous authoritative source. This could be religion or, as liberalism demands, the consent of individuals who could claim prior autonomy. Nietzsche emphatically rejected consent as a source of legitimacy. To think that state authority was legitimized by a contract was 'a romantic illusion'. And he added, 'Whoever can command, whoever is lord by nature, whoever steps forth violently, in deed and nature – what does he have to do with contracts!' (*GM*, II, 17). This marked Nietzsche's determination not to ground the legitimacy of state authority on contractual formalities. At the same time, he defended other forms of authority – charismatic authority and traditional authority – as legitimate.

§4 As expected, there is no systematic treatment of the notion of authority in Nietzsche. The most one can glean from the Nietzschean corpus are aperçus which, though not systematically ordered, show a surprising degree of consistency – Nietzsche validated traditional and charismatic forms of authority as defined by Weber. He was also invariably opposed to depersonalized normativism, namely formal legal forms of legitimation. He also rejected any attempt to ground authority in reason as opposed to the will.[118] Nietzsche attributed to charismatic individuals the heroic task of breaking away from the rule of normativity. This was implicit in his support for the Dorian authoritarian state and became explicit in his confrontation with Socrates' intellectualism and his contempt for the resentment elicited by Christian piety and Kantian morality.[119] It is useful to have this Weberian taxonomy in mind because we find Nietzsche arguing in similar fashion on the basis of these same types of authority. He denied legitimacy to normativism (Weber's formal legal authority) due to its impersonal, abstract and universalist standing. He also denied legitimacy to Socratic morality on the same grounds. Legitimate authority, in his view, was necessarily either embedded in tradition, or it was personal, concrete, and embodied by charismatic leaders.

In order to bring to light and make Nietzsche's own conception explicit, it appears pertinent to examine Weber's taxonomy on authority.[120] Weber distinguishes three types of authority: traditionalist, charismatic and formal juristic. All three constitute 'grounds for the legitimacy of rulership [*Herrschaft*]' (Weber, 1971: 507; my translation). In the case of traditionalist authority, 'the authority of the eternal yesterday' (Weber, 1971: 507), rulership rests on the 'belief in ordinary custom [*alltäglich Gewohnte*] as the unswerving norm of conduct' (Weber, 1972: 269). Traditionalism assumes patriarchal and patrimonial forms, lending authority both to the father and the

husband over members of the household, and to the aristocracy[121] and sovereign prince over vassals and subjects.[122]

Whereas traditionalism (or patriarchalism) extols the 'sanctity of the ordinary', charismatic rule underscores the 'sanctity or value of the extraordinary' (Weber, 1972: 270). Those who obey the commands of a charismatic leader do so because 'of their belief in the extraordinary quality of a specific *person*' (Weber, 1972: 269). Weber refers to magicians, prophets, warlords, and mentions specifically 'Caesarist rulers' as one of his examples: 'The legitimacy of their rule is grounded in the belief and devotion for the extraordinary, valued because it transcends normal human qualities and is therefore supernatural in its origins' (Weber, 1972: 269). Charismatic figures are guided by 'concrete revelations and inspirations', and in that respect their authority is 'irrational' (Weber, 1972: 269). Such leaders do not have to appeal to 'general norms'; and because they are 'not bound to what actually exists', they can break with tradition and introduce new directions (Weber, 1972: 269).

The problem faced by charismatic authority is succession. Who is supposed to rule after the prophet or the warlord dies? Weber describes an ordinary process of 'routinization' (*Veralltäglichung*), which leads to the establishment of rules of succession. This is the origin of what Weber calls 'the rule of rules' (*die Herrschaft von Regeln*) (Weber, 1972: 270). From this moment on, rulers no longer govern based on their personal qualities, 'but in virtue of acquired or inherited qualities'. In this way, the 'process of … traditionalization [*Traditionalisierung*] sets in' (Weber, 1972: 270). Despite the similarity, this type of authority is not to be confused with traditionalism. We now face a thoroughly procedural system of rational rules. Weber describes it as 'the triumph of *formalist* juristic rationalism' (Weber, 1972: 272). Obedience and submission are no longer owed to charismatic persons, but there arises 'an *impersonal* bond to the generally defined and functional "duty of office"' (Weber, 1972: 272), the purest expression of which is bureaucratic rule. Formal legal authority also coincides with what German jurisprudence defines as *Rechtsstaat*, or the rule of law. According to Weber,

> The official duty – like the corresponding right to exercise authority: the jurisdictional competency – is fixed by rationally established norms, by enactments, decrees, and regulations, in such a manner that the legitimacy of the authority becomes the legality of the general rule, which is purposefully thought out, enacted, and announced with formal correctness. (Weber, 1972: 27)

Implicit in Weber's synchronic taxonomy, one finds a diachronic dimension. Authority, in its origins, is tied to tradition. One recognizes it in the customs that sustain the continuous existence of any original community. These

customs tend naturally to fossilize and, as a result, rigid patterns of behaviour develop. Breaking up sclerotic modes of living and introducing innovative directions is possible when leadership is assumed by charismatic individuals. Once the changes brought about by the charismatic leader and a new mode of living is firmly in place, Weber acknowledges that a process of traditionalization (*Traditionalisierung*) sets in. But there is no turning back to traditional authority. A new form legitimation type arises, which is based on impersonal bonds. Weber characterizes it as formal legal authority, which is the one typically found in modern societies.[123]

Nietzsche does not engage in a similar theoretical elaboration. But throughout his exposition, one may discern the lineaments of Weber's taxonomy. Together with his conception of authority as traditional, one finds texts which emphasize its personal and charismatic aspects. Nietzsche traces legitimacy of authority back to the will or, more appropriately, to instinct. Authority cannot issue from abstract reason. If reason were to validate authority, it would require dialectical reasoning to justify it. Nietzsche objects to rationalism and excludes Descartes, the father of rationalism, 'who recognized only the authority of reason'. Reason, he continues, 'is only an instrument, and Descartes was superficial' (*BGE* §191). The authority Nietzsche has in mind issues direct commands that need no further dialectical discussion. If a justification were required, this would mean that authority was not to be taken seriously. It was not taken seriously by Socrates, who exemplified for disciples an authority mediated by dialectical reasoning. In doing so, he deviated from the sound *Sittlichkeit* of his fellow Athenians. In contrast, Nietzsche understood that 'before Socrates, dialectical manners were rejected in good society: they were seen as bad manners, they humiliated people. The young were warned against them. People were generally distrustful of reasons being displayed like this' (TI II, §5).[124] Genuine authority is charismatic – a matter of instinct and faith instead of knowledge and reason:

> The old theological problem of 'faith' and 'knowledge' – or more clearly, of instinct and reason – that is to say, the question whether in regard to the evaluation of things instinct deserves to have more authority than rationality, which wants to evaluate and act according to reasons [*nach Gründen*], according to a 'why?', that is to say according to utility and fitness for a purpose [*nach Zweckmässigkeit und Nützlichkeit*] – this is till that old moral problem which first appeared in the person of Socrates and was already dividing the minds of men long before Christianity. (*BGE* §191)

The logic of command and obedience is embedded in the notion of authority. We owe obedience to commands that embody genuine authority, and

not just commands qua commands. This means that only those who can claim authority may issue legitimate commands. A purely factual, non-normative authority needs to be ruled out by definition.[125] Authority is intrinsically normative. The political manifestation of the logic of command and obedience is a hierarchical order of society.

Nietzsche's objections were aimed specifically at the notion of political authority when grounded on the democratic will of the people. His tirades against the state were meant against the modern democratic state. He blames liberalism and democracy for distorting, and ultimately weakening authority. They did so by excising the authority that resided in concrete persons and traditional institutions, and then transferring it to abstract entities – the liberal rule of law and the democratic state, which he considered to be 'the declining form of the power to organize' (*TI*, 9, 39). In Nietzsche's view, the weakening and ultimate demise of authority was due to the democratic spirit: 'The historical sense (…the "divinatory instinct" for … the relation of the authority of values to the authority of effective forces): this historical sense … has come to us in the wake of the mad and fascinating semi-barbarism into which Europe has been plunged through the democratic mingling of classes and races' (*BGE* §224).

As an individualist, Nietzsche recognized individual evaluative freedom and rejected the legitimacy of the interventionist modern democratic state. As a conservative critic of liberalism, he seeks to restore the authority of spontaneous cultural formations, breeding ground for the heroic leaders and commanders he longed for.[126] At no point did he seek to subvert the notion of authority per se or refuse 'to legitimate any figure of authority', as interpreters close to Derrida see it (cf. Shrift, 2008: 1). The condition for the possibility of aristocratic leaders who can command the obedience of subordinates was their normative authority. A conception of a purely political, non-normative authority needs to be ruled out by definition.[127] Authority gives ethical breadth and normative status to political relations involving command and obedience. It also elevates Nietzsche above the status of cultural critic or historian, and justifies him as a genuine political philosopher.

§5 The dominant position in the Anglo-American tradition, which stems, as we have seen, from the seminal work of Walter Kaufmann, views Nietzsche as a steadfast anti-political thinker whose orientation is essentially cultural. He is recognized as the bearer of an aristocratic outlook and advocate for new nobility, but he is seen as putting forward cultural, not political, proposals.

Nietzsche, the argument goes, was not committed to the establishment of an actual aristocratic regime; his patrician heroes were not 'authoritarian, elitist and exploitative' political agents, intent, as he put it, 'on setting masses in motion' (*KSA*13, 16 [39]).[128] In addition, Nietzsche was critical of the normative authority demanded by liberalism, namely an authority normatively grounded on a social contract or antecedent consensus.

I would like to argue that in no case did Nietzsche intend to subvert the notion of authority per se or the legitimacy of non-normative authority. The priority that liberalism assigns to freedom means that any authority not stemming from consensus imposes slavery. What is natural, for classical liberalism, is the equality of individuals, hence its historical struggle for the elimination of feudal hierarchies. Nietzsche, in contrast, postulated natural inequality, and derived authority from the hierarchical subordination he found in natural formations. This was the fertile soil for the breeding of the aristocratic commanders he sought for. He may think that to 'serve the state … is not paganism but stupidity' (*KSA* I, 365); he may acknowledge that 'what is most important … is culture', and that 'culture and the state are antagonists' (*TI*, VIII, §4); Zarathustra may proclaim: 'Where the state ends begins the man who is not superfluous' (*Z*, I, 'Of the new idol'). But these assertions all have the modern state in sight. When Nietzsche looked back at antiquity, he recognized that the richest and most fecund culture flourished in Attica, and that the Dorian state was not the antagonist of that culture, but a condition of its possibility. As opposed to the modern state, the classical state was not democratic, but governed by aristocrats for aristocrats; it was not an end in itself, but an instrument for the development of a higher culture: 'The ancient state is far from sharing the utilitarian point of view of recognizing as culture only what is directly useful to the state itself' (*KSA* I, 708–9). In contrast, the modern democratic state 'presents itself as a mystagogue of culture', promotes itself 'as the highest goal', and subordinates 'all cultural endeavours to its own ends' (*KSA* I, 707–8). Nietzsche despaired of his actual political circumstances, and this radicalized his longing for the rebirth of the commanding authority wielded by an aristocratic state. If his concern was explicitly cultural this could not mean that it was not also political. Nietzsche's reading of Theognis may serve as proof of his conflation of politics and culture.

§6 The hegemony attained by democratic legitimacy in the modern world makes it difficult to conceive of non-democratic political regimes. It doesn't make much sense nowadays to dismiss democracy and defend monarchical or

aristocratic legitimacy. But this is precisely what Nietzsche did, as he so acknowledged in his response to a letter sent to him on 26 November 1887 by Georg Brandes, a well-known Copenhagen intellectual. Brandes pointed out that there was much in Nietzsche's writings that accorded with his own contempt for ascetic ideals and profound dislike 'with respect to democratic mediocrity'. He also noted that he converged with his 'aristocratic radicalism' (*KGB* III, 6, §500). Nietzsche responded from Nice on 2 December: 'The expression "aristocratic radicalism" that you employ is very clever. If you allow me, it is the shrewdest description that I have read about my person' (*KGB* III, 5, §960). A few weeks later, on 20 December, he wrote to Heinrich Köselitz and commented that Brandes had used the expression 'aristocratic radicalism' to characterize his writings. He then observed: 'This is well-said and meaningful' (*KGB* III, 5, §964).[129]

Nietzsche readily accepted Brandes's verdict, an indication of the centrality of aristocratism in his writings. There is no novelty in this.[130] What is novel is the enthusiasm with which Nietzsche recognized his own radicalism. Alfred von Martin observed that both Nietzsche and Burckhardt defended aristocratic conservative positions, but while Burckhardt was a conservative Whig, who admired Burke and detested revolution, Nietzsche was a revolutionary conservative who needed 'a *tabula rasa* to imprint the image of his own spiritual power over the ruins of present culture' (von Martin, 1941: 54; cf. 58–60, 97). His radicalism distanced him from conventional politics so that his aristocratism could adopt an anti-political affectation, which von Martin connected with Nietzsche's 'anarchist instincts' (von Martin, 1941: 60; cf. Lemm, 2011), and Conway with his 'autarkic individualism' (Conway, 1997: 33). Jensen points out that Nietzsche's 'immeasurable' contribution to European politics was 'paradoxically but fundamentally anti-political: Nietzsche saw himself variously as herald, critic and adviser with regard to the political, without participating directly in politics itself' (Jensen, 2007: 319). Jensen also acknowledges that Nietzsche's reading of Theognis helped him 'shape his notion of anti-politicality' (Jensen, 2007: 320). In his consideration, Nietzsche owes to Theognis the way to avoid 'governmental politicking' and instead 'influence culture on a grand scale' (Jensen, 2007: 326). But directly acting in day-to-day politics is not the only way of acting and thinking politically. Like Theognis, Nietzsche chose the advisory political role exemplified by Posa; like Theognis, he believed that one could not compete politically with democrats and the popular party, and instead engaged in a *Kulturkampf* against democrats and socialists. This would become the kind of

political action he would favour. Nietzsche observed that Theognis advised his disciple Cyrnus 'to follow a middle road between the opposing parties' (cf. vv. 331–2 and 219–20). This denotes an attitude typical of those who participate in political life and seek accommodation and compromise: 'When the city is in trouble, Cyrnus, keep calm (*μηδὲν ἄγαν*), and *like me* stay on the middle road' (vv. 219–20; my italics). At the same time, Nietzsche also observed that Theognis did not himself abide by Apollo's call for moderation, that he lost his calm and adopted a radically uncompromising personal attitude:

> But Theognis himself was, at the time, far from being moderate and selfrestrained in public affairs; each day, incited by the most violent anger and stirred by passion, he sent elegies to Cyrnus, whom he wanted to quiet down, in which he disclosed and portrayed, with appropriate colours, an inextinguishable hatred toward plebeians, his most unfriendly feelings against the degenerate nobles, and his contempt for disloyal friends. (*DTM*, 153)

Yet, as Jensen point out, Theognis didn't march nor did he fight in the streets, and neither did Nietzsche (Jensen, 2006: 326). But this cannot mean that Nietzsche was not a political combatant. Like Theognis, he chose to fight his politics on the field of culture. This matched his inclination towards solitude and his wandering life.[131] His individualism matched his radicalism.

In 'Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', Nietzsche maintained that humanity's aim was the production of its 'highest exemplars' (*KSA* 1, 317). According to Kaufmann, there was perhaps 'no more basic statement of Nietzsche's philosophy in all his writings than this statement. Here is … the clue to his "aristocratic" ethics and his opposition to socialism and democracy' (Kaufmann, 1950: 149; cf. 319).[132] Von Martin noted that his individualism marked another difference with Burckhardt; while Burckhardt wrote about the nobility as a social group, Nietzsche was a '*pur sang* individualist' whose only concern was the 'aristocratic individual' (von Martin, 1941: 19; 222, note 96; cf. Thiele, 1990: 28–48).[133]

Nietzsche's aristocratic radicalism is observable throughout the entirety of his writings and constitutes the core of his thought. Fredrick Appel rightly observes that 'Nietzsche's radical aristocratic commitments pervade every aspect of his project' (Appel, 1999: 5; cf. Detwiler, 1990; Dombowsky, 2004). Lawrence Hatab acknowledges the existence of a political language in Nietzsche, and that this language suggests 'an aristocratic, authoritarian political arrangement' (Hatab, 2008: 249). Nietzsche approved of the domination and exploitation of a mass of workers as the condition for the possibility of aristocratic excellence (cf. *BGE* §258). Excellence could only be generated through the imposition of a hierarchical order. In contrast,

democracy opposes authority and order, and reduces to what Nietzsche called 'misarchism', the term he coined to indicate the opposition 'against everything that rules and desires to rule' (*GM* II, 12). Hatab does not fail to mention the chilling assertion Nietzsche advanced in *AC* when he made explicit his preference for the elimination of 'the weak and the failures' in order to promote superior life (cf. *A* §2). He can thus categorically conclude that 'Nietzsche saw democracy and liberalism as forms of cultural decadence and obstacles to a higher politics' (Hatab, 2008: 249–50).

In spite of this conclusion, Hatab reaffirms his aim of using Nietzsche's thought to promote democratic politics. He believes that Nietzsche's critique against essentialism and rationalism, and his perspectivist epistemology, may be used to overcome levelling and also exclusionary practices that result from the modern democratic experience. Principally, Hatab identifies Nietzsche's agonism as a key ingredient to 'prepare a "post-modern" vision of democratic life', that is fully inclusive and affirms life (Hatab, 2008: 250). In spite of the criticisms levelled against a post-modern Nietzsche, Hatab insists that, though Nietzsche himself was not a democrat, 'in the spirit of his own thought he could have or should have been an advocate for democracy, but not in terms of traditional political theories' (Hatab, 2008: 251).

The argument employed by Hatab to defend his Nietzschean view of democracy assumes that 'democratic elitism' is not an oxymoron (Hatab, 2008: 225). This is possible because, as he himself acknowledges, he operates with a model of democracy derived from Robert Dahl, which is to be distinguished from the more substantive republican model that is visible in classical Athens and the Italian cities of the Renaissance (Hatab, 2008: 56).[134] This is a model of formal democracy that observes the participation of the people with suspicion and that need not 'imply any kind of substantive or intrinsic equality' (Hatab, 2008: 57). Hatab also maintains that a democratic theory could benefit from Nietzsche's critique of egalitarianism: and he goes on further to point out that democratic practice cannot abstain from implementing a representative function. Democracy also assigns merit, discriminates in its rewards and establishes lines of authority. It is thereby impossible to deny that democratic egalitarianism combines with certain aristocratic elements. In this limited sense, Schlegel could be right when he writes: 'A perfect republic would have to be more than just democratic, it would have to be at the same time aristocratic' (Friedrich Schlegel, quoted in Conant, 2001: 186). Thus, Nietzsche's aristocratism, which runs parallel to his acerbic critique of democracy, would paradoxically contribute to strengthen a democratic politics.

What Hatab does not take into account is the radicalism of Nietzsche's aristocratism. As I have demonstrated above, Nietzsche's radicalism, which seeks to subvert the cultural basis of democracy, makes it unimaginable that he could be recruited in the service of democracy. No reinterpretation or redescription will allow it.

§7 Second, one may agree with Hatab that Nietzsche was not interested primarily in drawing up concrete constitutional schemes or specific governmental programmes. His reserved aristocratic stance depended on the cultivation of exceptionally high human specimens who wielded charismatic authority to overstep the claims of formal legal authority. But Nietzsche's interpretation of the Theognidea shows that he had a good idea of how to implement politically his concern for the development of an aristocratic culture.

The essay on Napoleon III, written two years before *DTM*, gives us the interpretative context to understand its politics. In this early essay, Nietzsche celebrated Napoleon III 'as a political genius, one "who is governed by other and higher laws than the ordinary person" and whose genius can be recognized by his success' (Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 24). By underscoring its charismatic gist, Nietzsche traced the legitimacy of authority back to the will, to instinct. This is something Napoleon III owed to his uncle. Cameron and Dombowsky rightly note that Nietzsche evoked Napoleon I 'as an exemplar … intended to capture his politics of the future, particularly his Napoleonic ideal for a politically and economically unified Europe' (Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 173), and Dombowsky further suggests that Napoleon was 'the model for the Nietzschean commander' (Dombowsky, 2008: 368).[135] The authority claimed by Caesar, Napoleon and Bismarck was not grounded in abstract reason; the authority Nietzsche had in mind was meant to issue commands that did not require rational or dialectical justification. In contrast to Socrates' intellectualism, and closer to Luther's voluntarism, Nietzsche understood that 'wherever authority is still part of the social fabric [*zur guten Sitten gehört*], wherever people give commands [*befiehlt*], rather than give reasons [*begründet*], the dialectician is a type of clown: he is laughed at and not taken seriously' (TI, III, §5). Nietzsche contrasted the contingency of freedom to the stability of institutions: 'One lives for today, one lives very fast – one lives very irresponsibly: it is precisely this one calls "freedom". That which makes institutions institutions is scorned, loathed and repudiated: whenever the word

"authority" is so much as whispered one believes oneself in mortal fear of a new slavery' (*TI*, IX, §39).

While Nietzsche admired Napoleon as a genius, as a higher individuality, he also admired him 'for his objective political accomplishments – for his achievements in politics and warfare – which made him a higher individual. It is not simply who Napoleon *was* that made him a higher individual, but what he *did*' (Dombowsky, 2014: 21). Dombowsky has been able to identify the Bonapartist political policies and structures endorsed by Nietzsche. One may find an early formulation of those policies and structures in his description of the features of the Dorian aristocratic rule as he found them in Theognis. For this, one must acknowledge that Nietzsche's enthusiastic praise of Napoleon III is early evidence of his later adherence to Bonapartism and its staple features. If one considers that Nietzsche's *DTM* was written two years later than his essay on Napoleon III, would it be possible to understand *DTM* as having been authored by a proto-Bonapartist? Why not interpret his dissatisfaction with the analytic scientific approach to philology (*Sprachphilologie*) which failed to see itself as a mere means for substantive, contextual interpretations of the subject at hand? As we saw in Section I, Nietzsche developed a 'metaphysical' account to explain the conditions that sustained the Dorian system of government and allowed aristocrats to keep the people subjugated. This account was supplemented by an empirical description of those conditions which Nietzsche distilled from Theognis' nostalgic evocation of the Dorian state. These empirical features generally coincided with constituent elements of Nietzsche's own projected political order, which was Bonapartist in its main lines.[136] Seen from this perspective, Nietzsche's idea of the Dorian state appeared as a version of the *ancien régime*, Megara's popular insurrection as a rendition of the French Revolution, and Theognis as the mentor and counsellor of a counter-revolutionary Napoleon-like figure whose aim would be the restoration of the Dorian political and social system.

Dombowsky has aligned the structural features of Bonapartism with Nietzsche's projected new order (cf. Dombowsky, 2014: 44). In a similar way, it should be possible to align the five key characteristics of the Dorian aristocratic system discerned by Nietzsche with his description of the Bonapartist regime.

(1) In *DTM*, Nietzsche maintained that the Dorian aristocrats 'held in the highest esteem the antiquity of lineage and illustrious origin, especially when this origin could frequently be traced back to heroes and to the gods themselves as founders' (*DTM*, 158). But, after the demise of the aristocratic

regime, this could no longer be the case in Megara. In *DTM*, Nietzsche presented Theognis as a prime witness of this historical milestone. Theognis sought to rally the aristocrats by morally discrediting their plebeian adversaries and shaming their lack of ancestry.[137] Nietzsche would later on go a step further. Not only did he seek to dishonour the lower classes and disparage their morality, but he also denounced the degeneracy and decline of the European ruling class. Hence his call for a new morality and a new aristocracy. This new aristocracy would be open to all classes on the basis of merit, and would not be hereditary or dynastic (cf. Abbey, 2000: 98). An entry from Nietzsche's *Notebooks* of 1885 shows that he was somehow ambiguous on the precise bearing of the proposal. He wrote:

> The only nobility is that of birth and blood. (I do not refer here to the prefix 'von' and the *Almanach de Gotha*: this is a parenthesis for asses). Wherever people speak of the 'aristocrats of the spirit', reasons are generally not lacking for concealing something; it is known to be a password among ambitious Jews. Spirit alone does not ennoble; on the contrary, something is always needed to ennoble the spirit. What is then needed? Blood [*Des Geblüts*]. (*KSA* 11, 41 [3]; cf. Ottmann, 1999: 271)

Nietzsche rejected the idea of an aristocracy of the spirit, one founded on intellectual talent and achievements. He proposed an aristocracy of birth and blood (*Geblütsadel*), which implied hereditary transmission of privileges and the 'pride of ancestry' (*HH* §456; cf. Bertram, 2009: 19). This would conform to the old Dorian institutional arrangement. At the same time, Nietzsche dismissed the 'von' particle, which implied noble birth, and also the *Almanach de Gotha*, which kept records of Europe's dynastic succession. This does not accord with his rejection of a hereditary aristocracy. A plausible explanation of this ambiguity may lie in his agreement with Napoleon's projected creation of new European nobility, which would be open to all independently of descent. This was to be aristocracy based on merit, talent and public service (cf. Dombowsky, 2014: 39). At the same time, Napoleon designated his descendants as inheritors of his imperial office. As Emsley puts it, Napoleon instituted, by means of the *senatus consultum* of 1804, 'the hereditary transmission of the imperial dignity through [his] direct, natural, legitimate and adoptive descent …' (Emsley, 2003: 16). The Dorian institution of pure aristocratic lineage discerned by Nietzsche may be aligned not with Napoleon's new non-hereditary, civic aristocracy, but with his imperial hereditary scheme.

(2) Nietzsche acknowledged in *DTM* that the Dorian aristocracy 'mastered the use of weapons and the knowledge of war' and had 'the exclusive right to govern the republic and admit no one from the people to administer it' (*DTM*,

158–9). He also traced the moral and political decline of the Megarian aristocrats to the fact that they 'did not preserve the integrity of ancient customs, but often gave themselves over to luxury and pleasure, gradually gave up military duty, and did not administer their patrimony moderately' (*DTM*, 162). An equivalent idea was conveyed by Napoleon. According to Dombowsky, Napoleon sought to create a new nobility between 1804 and 1808 whose members would come 'primarily from the military' (Dombowsky, 2014: 39). This manifested his desire 'to organize society aristocratically along martial lines', so that the 'Napoleonic regime was largely legitimated on the basis of its military victories and military glory' (Dombowsky, 2014: 74). In a passage from his *Notebooks* from 1885, when Nietzsche pondered the future, one can discern an echo of his faith in Bonapartism: 'The situation of Europe in the next century will once again lead to the breeding of manly virtues, because one will live in constant danger. "Universal military duty" is already the peculiar antidote against the effeminacy of democratic ideas' (*KSA* 11, 34 [203]). And when Nietzsche considered the classical past, his faith in Napoleon came again into sight. In *GS*, in a paragraph titled *Our faith in the masculinization of Europe*, he praised Napoleon for introducing 'sophisticated yet popular war on the largest scale (in terms of weapons, talents, discipline)'. Napoleon opposed the modern 'brotherhood of all peoples' and a 'blooming exchange of hearts', and thus restored the spirit of antiquity: 'Napoleon, who saw something of a personal enemy in modern ideas and in civilization itself … brought back a whole piece, a block of granite, perhaps the decisive one, of antiquity's essence' (*GS* §362).

(3) The Dorian aristocracy's main source of legitimacy stemmed from its monopoly over the administration of the sacred rites. As Nietzsche saw it in *DTM*, 'the administration of all sacred rites was in their hands. This led aristocrats to assume that the gods were propitious to them, while wrathful towards the plebeians' (*DTM*, 159). Napoleon understood the political importance of religion, and Nietzsche in his *Notebooks* of 1884 shows his awareness of that strategic stance: 'Napoleon: religion as a pillar of good morals, true principles, good customs. And the man's anxiety is such that he needs the vagueness and the marvel which it offers him' (*KSA* 11, 25 [188]). By means of religion, Napoleon sought to consolidate aristocratic rule and the deep social inequality it implied. During a conversation with Roederer at Malmaison, Napoleon famously said: 'Society cannot exist without inequality of fortune, and inequality of fortune cannot exist without religion' (Dombowsky, 2014: 66). In section 2, above, where I examined the section titled *Religion and Government* (*HH* §472), Nietzsche traced the decline of the

state to the moment when religion ceases to be public, and turns into a private affair. Harking back at what he had established in *DTM*, he now recognizes that in classical times one social class took custody of the state and used religion as a form of legitimation. This is something that Napoleon was keenly aware of. Nietzsche writes: 'As Napoleon understood it, without the help of priests no power may be 'legitimate' [*legitim*]' (*HH* §472).

(4) The splendour of wealth and refinement proper to Dorian aristocrats served to enhance their power and authority. Nietzsche wrote in *DTM* that 'many Theognidean poems … assume as obvious that virtue, as well as wealth and honour, cannot be understood unless they are put together and entwined by the closest links' (*DTM*, 160). And he quoted vv. 525–6: *For it is fair that the good possess wealth, while poverty is appropriate for the bad man*. This coincides with Napoleon's idea that his imperial regime should make property rights inviolable and absolute. Pomp and ceremony should make the sacrosanctity of property manifest. With Napoleon, the republican austerity of the Consulate gave way to the dazzling spectacle offered by the Empire: 'high dignitaries and potentates; marshals and princes of the blood, pomp and ceremonials, prayers for the Emperor, fancier costumes and uniforms. The power of all of this to capture both the elite and popular imagination was as important as its power to incline people toward obedience and respect' (Englund, 2004: 238). At one point, Napoleon told Comte de Rémusat that pomp was necessary 'in order to throw powder in people's eyes' (Englund, 2004: 300). Nietzsche faithfully recorded this conversation in his *Notebooks* of 1880 (*KSA* 9, 6 [35]). He also noticed that Napoleon loved the pomp of the *ancien régime*, 'so as to render the parvenu less visible' (*KSA* 9, 6 [36]; cf. Dombowsky, 2014: 67).

One way by which Theognis defamed the lower classes, in the manner of dandyism, was to deride their clothing – they '*wore goatskins on their sides*' (*DTM*, 135). This observation coincides with the importance dandyism placed on 'the *homme élégant* and the *homme comme il faut*' (Stanton, 1980: 56). In the semantic field of dandyism, elegance appeared as a heroic act, as a way to show selfassertion and the craving for domination. In the case of Nietzsche, his concern for appearance 'excited frequent comment because of an evident attention to it amounting, almost, to dandyism' (Young, 2010: 103). His immersion in Napoleonic literature, particularly his interest in Stendhal and Barbey d'Aurevilly, would point in the same direction. The figure of Napoleon's eminence fuelled the urge for conquest and domination exhibited by the dandy (cf. Stanton, 1980: 66–7; Bianquis, 1929: 79–84).

(5) In *DTM*, Nietzsche held that the Dorian aristocracy conjoined its wealth 'with cultural instruction and the study of the liberal arts' (*DTM*, 160). One should note that this cultural endeavour did not produce an abstract body of knowledge that would be universally transmissible. It was the exclusive property of aristocratic families and, as Nietzsche acknowledges, it was 'transmitted from ancestors to their children and descendants, so that, as Theognis declared, he did not hand over to Cyrnus anything but "such things as I myself, Cyrnus, learned from good men while still a child"' (*DTM*, 161). This meant that the virtue possessed by Dorian aristocrats was transmitted by birth and not taught by instruction (cf. *BGE* §213). As Theognis recognized, 'only by teaching, you will never turn a bad man into a good man' (vv. 437–8). He shared this view with Pindar, for whom virtue could not be learnt but was inherited by blood. Thus, he wrote in the third Nemean ode:

> 'A man excels in might through inborn worth; but he who only possesses what he has learned is a wavering obscure mortal; never steps forth on firm foot, but tastes, with immature spirit, innumerable pursuits' (cf. Jaeger, 1959: 287).

All this goes to show that, in *DTM*, Nietzsche engaged in political philology and superimposed one historical event upon another – the French Revolution upon Megara's democratic revolution, and Napoleon's counterrevolutionary ideology upon the ideals Theognis instilled in his disciple. Despite the fact that he had little to say with respect to the detailed structure and functioning of political institutions, his affirmation of aristocratism and dismissal of democracy exhibited political awareness and intent. The fact that Theognis had a purely advisory role in politics cannot be said to be, as Jensen maintains, the root of Nietzsche's anti-politicality. The comparison he advanced between Theognis with Posa shows that he understood that Cyrnus was being trained to become a political leader charged with a mission – the restoration of aristocratic rule in Megara. Again, there are not traces of a philosophical elaboration of politics in Nietzsche's *DTM*, but his encounter with Theognis would leave an indelible impression, discernible later on when, as Negri notices, 'the philosopher became theoretically focused in the construction of his "aristocratic" vision of the human world' (Negri, 1985: 77).[138] This aristocratic vision must be granted both temporal and conceptual priority. On the one hand, it is important to realize that *DTM* was Nietzsche's first systematic and in-depth study of a classical author who had privileged access to the demise of Megarian aristocratism and the birth of Greek democracy. It should be clear that Nietzsche took the side of the defeated aristocrats from the

very start. On the other hand, it is also important to recognize that Nietzsche assigned priority to politics over epistemology. Hatab is right in observing that epistemic considerations were instrumental for Nietzsche, that he used epistemology for political aims. Epistemology did not serve Nietzsche to filter and refine democratic practice, as Hatab claims, but to dismantle and overthrow it altogether.

Hatab circumscribes to the cultural sphere what he perceives to be Nietzsche's contribution to the enhancement of democracy. He acknowledges that his aristocratism could be extended to the political sphere, with a caveat – Nietzsche had nothing to say with respect to the 'formation of institutions, actual political practices, the justification of coercion, and the extent of sovereignty' (Hatab, 2008: 255). His aristocratism aimed exclusively at the improvement of human creativity and excellence. Hatab believes that Nietzsche's conception of culture was 'compatible with, and even constitutive of, much of democratic politics and life' (Hatab, 2008: 256). This presupposes the possibility of separating the cultural and the political as entirely distinct spheres. It also presupposes that one dismisses Nietzsche's radicalism. It seems to me that it is precisely his radicalism that disallows the possibility of attributing to Nietzsche a drastic separation of culture and the political. He may have affirmed his anti-politicality, but did so by adopting the same strategy assumed by Theognis. As noted by Jensen, when confronted with Megara's political upheavals which disastrously undermined aristocratism and introduced democracy, Theognis sought to instigate a cultural reaction aimed at subverting the foundations of the new regime. This could be attained, he thought, not by direct participation in political affairs, but through a cultural revolution that would invigorate aristocratic values, norms and affinities (cf. Jensen, 2007: 326). This revolution would be spearheaded by a charismatic leader trained according to 'the ancient teachings of the aristocracy' (*DTM*, 143). Nietzsche adopted a similar strategy. Party or governmental politicking was temperamentally foreign to him. He did not see this as a convenient way to bring forth institutional change. At the same time, he was deeply convinced that through the ideological degrading of democracy and socialism, the cultural elevation of aristocratism and his contribution to the formation of a charismatic leader, his aristocratic convictions would come to prevail. This was the radical lesson he owed to Theognis.

Notes

1 I wish to thank Don Dombowsky and Howard Williams for clarifying my thinking on Nietzsche and spurring me on to write this book. For comments and discussion on the sections of this book, I thank Marcela Cristi, Frank Cameron, David Florzyck, Gary Foster, Scott Gallimore, Douglas E. Gerber, Jorge Heine, Javier Ibáñez-Noé, Manuel Knoll, Vanessa Lemm, Graeme Nicholson, Ashwani Peetush, Michael Pelias, Barry Stocker, Miguel Vatter, Oscar Velásquez and Byron Williston. I also owe thanks to an anonymous referee of *Animus* which published an early version of Part III. An earlier version of Part I appeared Manuel Knoll and Barry Stocker (editors), *Nietzsche as Political Philosopher*, Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2014. My deep appreciation to Professor Dr Natascha Würzbach for her most generous encouragement to write about her father's life and his work on Nietzsche. The Bundesarchiv in Berlin-Lichterfeld and the *Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv* in Weimar kindly allowed me access to Friedrich Würzbach's correspondence. I owe to Martha Zapata useful information on the *Nietzsche Gesellschaft* and its membership.

2 For all these questions, see Knoll and Stocker, 2014.

3 For Nietzsche's debt to Plato in this respect, see Knoll, 2009: 172; and Knoll, 2010: 12–15.

4 As Patrick Wotling writes, 'toute hiérarchie se détermine par le processus de commandement et d'obéissance' (Wotling, 2010: 51). Alternatively, Robert Guay considers that order of rank 'is essential to understanding Nietzsche's philosophical enterprise … [and] central to the very enterprise of philosophy' (Guay, 2013: 485 & 507). Guay quotes from Nietzsche's *Notebooks*: 'my philosophy is directed at order of rank: not to an individualist morality' (*KSA* 12, 7 [6], 280) and advances a normative, non-political interpretation of order of rank. This interpretation does not advocate a 'substantive picture of how life should be arranged for everyone', but merely offers a reflection 'on the possibility of normative authority in general' (Guay, 2013: 495). This requires the abstraction of the substantive natural differences implied by an ethics of command and obedience. Guay thus disregards the correlation Nietzsche ascertains between order of rank and command and obedience: 'To command and to obey is the fundamental fact: this assumes an order of rank' (*KSA* 11, 26[85], 171). One should note that Nietzsche's aristocratism postulates the superior worth of some individuals. Individuals are not only unequal but have unequal value. This is the point of departure for *Rangordnungen*, unequal rights, and also the right to command: the morally and intellectually best should and deserve to rule. Inspired by Theognis, Nietzsche described aristocrats as 'humans of a higher rank' (*GM* I, 5). Ultimately, Guay assumes that Nietzsche reduced the political to the state's coercive power (Guay, 2013: 500). But political authority, not power, was the centre of Nietzsche's attention. In his view, the authority of the state was not to be understood as normative, but as the charismatic authority of a representative person like Caesar or Napoleon. Guay bases his normative, transcendental interpretation of Nietzsche's order of rank on Foucault's view that 'power's condition of possibility … must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point' (Guay, 2013: 501, note 19). I will try to come to terms with this post-modern view on power and authority in Part III of this Introduction.

5 Like Warren, Alan Schrift is ready to admit that Nietzsche's 'own political judgments may be seriously flawed', but that his philosophy may serve to enhance democratic projects. 'While Nietzsche', Schrift admits, 'was not a democrat, he could have been' (Schrift, 2000: 222, 230; cf. Lotter, 2008: 434–5).

6 The two books requested by Nietzsche were Theodor Bergk, *Anthologia lyrica continens Theognim, Babrium, Anacreontea cum ceterorum poetarum reliquiis selectis*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1854; and Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, *Theognidis Reliquiae, novo ordine disposuit, commentationem criticam et notas adiecit*, Frankfurt: Broenner, 1826 (cf. *KGB*, I, 1, 277).

7 Negri speculates that these short queries were articulated by Nietzsche in the title of the third section of *DTM* (cf. Negri, 1985: 6, note 6).

8 As historical evidence to support his argument in *DTM*, Nietzsche refers to Clinton (1838), Rochette (1815), Müller (1824; cf. 1839), Plaß (1852), Duncker (1856) and Grote (1869). When Nietzsche

mentions Theognis again in *GM*, in connection with the social and political status of the nobility, one should assume that those are the sources of the historical evidence that backs his argument. Failure to take *DTM* into account explains why Peter Berkowitz writes that *GM* is, in that respect, a 'freewheeling reconstruction, devoid of reference to specific historical situation' (Berkowitz, 1995: 74). More generally, Lawrence Hatab also refers to Nietzsche's genealogical investigations in *GM* as 'quasi-historical' (Hatab, 2008: 29). In contrast, Anthony Jensen thinks that 'Nietzsche was not merely a philosopher interested in history. He was himself a philosopher *of* history' (Jensen, 2013: 1).

9 In his letter to Hermann Mushacke (14 March 1866), Nietzsche used the expression 'philological woodcutting' (*philologisches Holzhacken*) to describe the work he was engaged in at that moment at Leipzig (*KGB* I, 2, 116).

10 Nietzsche owed this observation to Welcker, who wrote: 'Theognis, who was fully immersed in this culture, refrains from any familiar term for both classes. He regularly resorts to terms for both, which, having been adopted for the general populace, we have not changed. Generally he calls nobles 'aristocrats' (*ἀγαθούς*) or even 'rich men' (*ἐσθλούς*), while the general population comprises 'lesser born men' (*κακούς*) and, in some cases, 'wretches' (*δειλούς*). The moral and political meaning of those terms, which have mostly been neglected by lexicographers and the majority of commentators, must be distinguished … This terminology does not seem to have been unique to Theognis, but perhaps commonplace terms were adopted casually by him from the Megarians of the time, and especially from the nobility. Since names for the classes, whatever they were, could not be absent, and since there was so constant and so regular a repetition of both classes, unless they had converted their meaning closer to a political use, in my opinion, shameless and tasteless terminology must not be employed. Perhaps outside of Megara at that time, another common designation was preferred, which had been mitigated not by common use and which would have been able to produce some ambiguity among a contemporary scholar concerning each name' (Welcker, 1826: xxi–xxii, trans. Scott Gallimore). In this respect, Welcker followed K. O. Müller, for whom 'the terms "good" and "bad" signify political rank and lineage, not moral attitudes' (Porter, 2000: 233).

11 There is disagreement among ancient sources on whether Theognis was born in Megara Hyblaea, Sicily (as reported by Plato in *Laws*) or in Nisaean Megara at the isthmus of Corinth (as reported by Didymus). Most scholars agree with Didymus (cf. Harrison, 1902: 268ff; Hudson-Williams, 1910: 4–6; Carrière, 1948: 5ff). As to the year of his birth, Martin West has indicated a much earlier dating for Theognis. He believes some of the verses were composed shortly before the rule of Theagenes (West, 1974: 67–8). For recent accounts on biographical data concerning Theognis, see Figueira, 1985: 121–4; Gerber, 1997: 121–3.

12 According to Teuffel, the returning aristocrats 'responded to terrorism with terrorism' (Teuffel, 1852: 1849). From Teuffel's use of this vivid language to describe events in Megara one may surmise the impact the 1848 Revolution could have had on him, and derivately on the young Nietzsche. Teuffel may be said to engage in what may be characterized as 'political philology'.

13 For an alternative view, see Robin Lane Fox, who dismisses what he sees as Aristotle's loose use of the term 'democracy' and doubts that democracies could exist in mainland Greece before 508 (Fox, 2002: 42–44). It appears to be that the tribal 'reshuffling', Fox acknowledges, and which gave 'a new prominence to outlying villagers, the "animal kingdom" of Theognis' past, and diluted his own social equals in the units which previously ran Megara', constituted the social foundation of democracy.

14 Following Stanton's taxonomy, it is tempting to characterize the young Theognis as a dandy, just as the Homeric *καλός καγαθός* could be said to be the model for the *honnête homme*. Stanton writes: 'And whereas honnêteté was the principal secular ideal elaborated for an established nobility of the *ancien régime*, dandyism, formulated by a self-styled aristocracy, represents an ex-centric impulse, directed at the bourgeois-dominated post-revolutionary society' (Stanton, 1980: 7).

15 Seven years later, the Paris Commune must have conjured up in Nietzsche memories of what he had learned about the Megarian revolution which he has seen through Theognis' eyes. According to Peter Bergmann, Nietzsche was 'quick to ascribe the most terrifying significance to the Commune' (Bergmann, 1987: 86). For Nietzsche, this was 'a profound shock that seemingly confirmed all his fears of the cultural barbarism of the lower classes' (Bergmann 1987: 120; cf. Dombowsky, 2003: 25–7).

16 In his commentary, Welcker wrote: 'It has not been recorded by which name either the upper or lower classes were called in Megara. Aristotle, in a broader and more general voice than he uses elsewhere, calls the upper class nobles (*γνωρίμους*), *les Notables* (see Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.2.6, although Mor. and Zeun. reconstruct *γεωμόρους* [landowners]), and wealthy men (*πλουσίους*). The remaining people he calls plebs (*τὸν δημον*)' (Welcker, 1826: xx, trans. Scott Gallimore).

17 Nietzsche's chronology coincides roughly with Grote's: 'the life of the poet seems to fall between 570–490 BC, while Theagenes must have ruled about 630–600 BC' (Grote, 1869: III, 46).

18 Theognis refers, in vv. 757–64 and 773–84, to the Persian menace. This must refer to the invasions by Darius in 490 and Xerxes 480–79. But Gerber prefers to think that Theognis cannot be the author of those verses (Gerber, 1999: 287).

19 Robin Lane Fox illustrates the impact Theognis' elegies would have had on late fifth century high society young Athenians. 'The Platonic and Xenophontic dialogues give hints of the opinions which a gilded young man would bring to his first encounter with a tutor in philosophy. The maxims of aristocratic poetry, the very maxims known to us in the Theognid corpus, are unmistakably in attendance. They spoke to these young men's innate sense of superiority, some of them true *agathoi* by birth, some of them also *kaloi* by appearance, some of them *agathoi* by recent family tradition and riches which had lost their first, post-Eupatrid lustre. They knew these poems by heart, not just because their fathers and first teachers had passed them on. They had also sung them and recited them at parties since their youth' (Fox, 2000: 48).

20 Vv. 105–9 *Doing good to the δειλοὺς, is a most useless kindness;*
it is like sowing the white furrows of the sea.
Because neither sowing the sea will yield a rich harvest:
nor by doing good to the κακοὺς would you receive any good in return.

21 There is an echo of Theognis in Nietzsche's *Notebook* entry of 1883: 'The offspring of shopkeepers are unseemly' (*KSA* 10, 22 [1] 613).

22 Nietzsche could read in Welcker's introduction to his edition of Theognis' poems, that aristocratism was not exceptional, but a commonly held opinion among Greek literary figures:

> The doctrine of the Theognis was subservient to the opinion and conditions of the Optimates for a long time, in which he seemed not at all suited to desire advantage for all of humankind … His own doctrine has an idea at its foundation, an ancient dictum that Euripides describes thusly (*Dict*. fr. 11):
>
> *A wealthy man would not be born from an ill-born father*.
>
> And Alcmaeon (8):
>
> *Rich children are born from rich men*,
> *By nature, ill born children are equal to their father*.
>
> Pindar, the ancient author (*Pyth*. VIII.62):
>
> *By nature, a noble spirit is conspicuous in children from their fathers*.
>
> Homer, concerning Telemachus:
>
> *Noble strength is instilled from the father*.
>
> From there, that idea becomes common: *piety comes from piety, wickedness from wickedness* (Soph. *El*. 589, cf. 374, 384), *the worst man comes from the ill born* (*Phil*. 386; Aristoph. *Ran*. 731). Therefore, our poet had justification to assert that among the lower classes who were destitute of common rights and ideas, nature did not strengthen their qualities, just as Aristodemus said of Sparta, according to Alcaeus, that no poor man is good or honorable: *a man may have property, but no poor man is wealthy or honorable*. Moreover, virtue and respectability depend altogether on a foundation in nobility and in the ancestral possession of land and honor, a fact which cannot be separated from a connection with noble blood. Concerning this opinion, a truer and more elegant opinion is not able to be brought forth than what is declared by Aristotle (*Polit*. I. 2, (4) 19), that

nobles, since they believes themselves great not only at home, but wherever nobles may exist, separate a slave from a free-man, nobles from men of low birth, in no other way than by virtue and vice. In the way that man comes from man and beast from beast, thus they believe that good men are born from good' (Welcker, 1826: liii–liv, trans. Scott Gallimore).

[23] Jensen appears to have now abandoned this view (compare Jensen, 2007: 338; and Jensen, 2013: 21).

[24] This view is advanced by Werner Jaeger who interprets the 'aristocratic theory' (*Adelslehre*) offered by Theognis as a 'cultural [*geistige*] struggle against the social revolution', a struggle that 'should not be understood narrowly as a strict political activity' (Jaeger, 1959: 263 and 266). The reason for this, it seems to me, is that Theognis saw that Megara's aristocratic minority could not prevail politically given the new social situation. It is true that he advised his disciple 'to act like an octopus that takes on the colour of the rock to which it adheres, and constantly changes its coloration' (Jaeger, 1959: 266; cf. Theognis vv. 213–18, 313–14, 1071–4). But this pliability and flexibility should not be read as willingness to reach a democratic compromise, but as a way to disguise the political intentions of his *Kulturkampf* against it. A more sweeping interpretation would be to surmise that a total breakdown of civility in Megara predisposed Theognis to distrust everyone, even his aristocratic friends. Thus, Theognis advised Cyrnus: 'Cyrnus, show a versatile ethos to all your friends, adapting yourself to the disposition of each one. Be like this now, and then behave like that. Wisdom is better than great virtue' (vv. 1071–4; cf. Harrison, 1902: 138–9, Collins, 1997: 290).

[25] Nietzsche imagined Cyrnus as Don Carlos, a royal figure who would overcome democratic legitimacy; it is highly plausible that he also had Napoleon III in mind. Though Nietzsche, like Theognis, did not propose a detailed political program, and sought 'to promote an ethic that [was] hostile to democratic civility', those 'ancient teachings of the aristocracy' necessarily included a reference to its political institutions (Fossen, 2008: 299). Fossen's attempt to separate ethics from politics assumes a very abstract and narrow conception of the political. It should also be noted that later, in *TI* and *AC*, Nietzsche presented Manu as the founder of an admirable and exemplary aristocratic political regime, but 'not as a blueprint for political reform in late modernity' (Conway, 1997: 34). Nietzsche was aware that 'the restoration of political aristocracy is simply out of the question' (Conway, 1997: 34). In this way, he shared Theognis' realization that an aristocratic restoration was not feasible politically once democracy became hegemonic. But he still hoped that he would be able to intervene in politics through his disciple by transmitting to him 'the ancient teachings of the aristocracy' (*DTM*, 143). Cyrnus was 'the man he one day hoped would devise plans to implement his counsel' (*DTM*, 143).

[26] Possibly for this reason Nietzsche made no mention of vv. 147–8 in *DTM*. There, Theognis wrote: 'The whole virtue is summed up in justice; every man, Cyrnus, is *ἀγαθός* if he is just.' This couplet shows us how much Theognis had, presumably in his old age, tamed his radicalism (at least overtly), and did no longer defend the traditional aristocratic ethos. As A. W. Adkins rightly observes, the fact that in these verses Theognis claims, without reservations, that anyone who is just is also *ἀγαθός*, 'smashes the whole framework of Homeric values' (Adkins, 1972: 44). It is also possible that Nietzsche followed Teuffel's view that abstract formulations, like the one above, were not part of the original poems devoted to Cyrnus (cf. Teuffel, 1852: 1849; for a different interpretation, cf. Donlan, 1980: 94).

[27] Welcker, Bernhardy and much of Germany's nineteenth century historiography accepted the interpretation of Greek history advanced by Karl Otfried Müller. In 1824, Müller had published *Die Dorier*, in which he sought to define the essence of the Greek spirit, whose pure form he located not in Athens 'but in the archaic and aristocratic culture of Sparta' (Porter, 2000: 233).

[28] This historical development takes place principally in Corinth, Megara and Sykion between 650 and 600 BC (cf. Grote, 1869; Arnheim, 1975; Morris, 1996).

[29] Nietzsche followed Müller, for whom 'the principal deities of the Dorians were Apollo and Artemis, since their worship seems to have predominated in all the settlements of that race' (Müller, 1824: II, 219)

[30] Without mentioning Nietzsche, Hudson-Williams writes that the ascription of the *Musa paedica* to Theognis 'has been challenged on various grounds, and the evidence against the authenticity of the second book is so strong that the great majority of editors and critics have had no hesitation in rejecting

the claims of Theognis, and here there can be no doubt that they are right' (Hudson-Williams, 1910: 55 and 77).

31 Nietzsche wrote: 'To be sure, Welcker is right in thinking that the last part of the amatory argument of the *Theognidea*, attached to the remaining fragments from a single codex, was spurious, because these poems, of unknown author, were attributed to Theognis on the basis of Suidas' words, "*Sentences to Cyrnus, the lover of Theognis*", a view with which I strongly disagree' (*DTM*, 145).

32 As Jensen rightly observes, Nietzsche assumed, in agreement with the attitudes towards sexuality in the nineteenth century that 'pederasty was incompatible with the image of Greek nobility'. In this respect, Nietzsche's views reflect 'the conservative scholarly attitude towards Greek sexuality in the nineteenth century. It is now usually agreed that drunkenness and pederastic tendencies were far more common than Nietzsche and his colleagues were inclined to believe' (Jensen, 2014: 112, note 31). The same conservative attitude is visible in Hudson-Williams who thought that when Suidas referred to Cyrnus as the lover of Theognis, this could 'be readily applied to a blameless friendship' (Hudson-Williams, 1910: 101).

33 Dorothea Wender draws an unflattering portrait of Theognis, presenting him as 'not at all likeable. He seems to have been a savage, paranoid, bigoted, bitter, narrow, pompous, self-pitying person … The lower classes are "the bad"; aristocrats are "the good". But even among gentlemen, almost everyone is untrustworthy, and few have any brains. It's better never to be born, second best to die young' (Wender, 1973: 92).

34 In the year 433, Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, wrote a defence of Christianity against Emperor Julian the Apostate.

35 Janz considers it unfair to emphasize excessively the attention Nietzsche paid to Theognis during his Pforta days. In Janz's view, 'Theognis was for [Nietzsche] a purely scholarly task of exclusive philological interest without essential inner conviction' (Janz, 1978: 94). In contrast, Negri points out that Nietzsche appeals to Theognis when he wants to define the nature of the aristocratic in his mature works (cf. Wollek, 2010: 286). In *BGE*, for instance, he implicitly evokes Theognis when he writes: 'It is a fundamental belief of all aristocrats that the common people are liars. "We who are truthful" – thus did the nobility of ancient Greece designate themselves' (*BGE* §260; cf. Negri, 1985: 12–13). This should prove Negri's assertion that 'what one studies as a young person, will certainly not be forgotten, particularly when in one prevails an obstinate aristocratic attitude that makes one ferociously hostile to any form of civil egalitarianism' (Negri, 1985: 27). It should also give credence to Negri's assertion that the Theognidean corpus merits inclusion among the books of the ancients that Nietzsche acknowledged in *TI*, 'What I Owe to the Ancients', §1, as counting for anything in his life (Negri, 1985: 31; cf. Cancik, 2000: 11).

36 Chester Starr proposes that 'the compendium of short poems passing under the name of Theognis is in reality the work of many conservatives across the late sixth and fifth century' (Starr, 1977: 9).

37 According to Chester Starr, 'in Theognis the term *demos* first begins to have a pejorative meaning as socially inferior' (Starr, 1992: 24).

38 In connection with Sappho, who wrote 'I love luxury' (fr. 58, 25), Ian Morris comments: 'luxury bridged the gulf between mortals and gods … Lavish display made the aristocracy something more that human' (Morris 1996, 32).

39 Later, in *HH*, Nietzsche conceives the Olympic gods in relation to humans as two castes living side by side, 'one more powerful and aristocratic, and the other less aristocratic' (*HH* §111). He recognizes this to be 'the aristocratic aspect of Greek religiosity' (*HH* §111), and believes that humans think of themselves as aristocratic 'when they give themselves such gods and place themselves in a relation similar to that of lower aristocrats to higher ones' (*HH* §114).

40 In 1865, one year after completing *DTM*, Nietzsche discovered Schopenhauer's metaphysics, and this led him to abandon the '*sprachphilogische* methodology of his early work for the sake of an aesthetic intuition' (Jensen, 2013: 58). This marks a break in the continuity of his historical methodology, but not of his political vision. Nietzsche could now also empathize with his aristocratism, in full view when he wrote: 'If you want Utopian plans, I would say: the only solution to the problem is the despotism of the wise and noble members of a genuine aristocracy, a genuine nobility, achieved by mating the most

magnanimous men with the cleverest and most gifted women. This proposal constitutes *My Utopia* and my Platonic Republic' (Schopenhauer, quoted in Ansell-Pearson, 1994: 215, note 5).

41 Inspired by Huizinga, Domna Stanton writes: 'the aristocrat *qua* artist aspires to dream-like or poetic activity', what Nietzsche calls the Apollonian, and produces 'by customs, by manners, by costume, by deportment the illusion of a heroic being' (Stanton, 1980: 3). The full text of Huizinga's text quoted by Stanton is the following: 'All aristocratic life in the later Middle Ages is a wholesale attempt to act the vision of a dream. In cloaking itself in the fanciful brilliance of the heroism and probity of the past age. The life of the nobles elevated itself to the sublime … In aristocratic periods … to be representative of true culture means to produce by conduct, by customs, by manners, by costume, by deportment, the illusion of an heroic being, full of dignity and honour, of wisdom and, at all events, of courtesy' (Huizinga, 1956: 39).

42 According to Stanton, 'The aristocracies of dandyism and honnêteté were determined to exemplify what Veblen calls "conspicuous leisure", the deliberate abstention from all recognized forms of labour as an essential sign of superiority' (Stanton: 1980: 98).

43 Nietzsche associates Apollo with Schopenhauer's metaphysics, according to which the world of phenomena is defined by the *principium individuationis*. Apolline consciousness grasps reality as a world inhabited by discrete individuals separated by space and time. In contrast, Dionysian intoxication presents reality as a non-individual primordial unity which Nietzsche associates with Schopenhauer's Will and with Rousseau, who 'serves Nietzsche as the representative of the dangers of Dionysian frenzy' (Kaufmann, 1968: 169). Through Dionysus speaks the primordial unity, namely 'the primal mother, eternally creative beneath the surface of incessantly changing appearances, eternally forcing life into existence' (*BT* §16).

44 The aristocratic soul is open to horizontal competition *inter pares*. For Nietzsche, the aristocratic soul is essentially egoistic, but it recognizes that 'there are others with rights equal to its own' (*BGE* §265). As soon as those others are seen as belonging to the same rank, the aristocratic soul 'moves among these its equals and equals-in-rights with the same sure modesty and tender reverence it applies to itself' (*BGE* §265). But there is no competition with individuals of a lower rank that are separated by a hierarchical chain of command. Individuals of lower ranks 'have to be subordinate by their nature, and sacrifice themselves' to individuals of higher rank (*BGE* §265). *Pace* Vanessa Lemm, one may say that 'the horizontal perspective inherently belongs to the noble', but in relation to other nobles exclusively (Lemm, 2011: 94).

45 This is a paraphrase of Mark Warren's characterization of Nietzsche's politics as a neo-aristocratic conservatism – 'a conservatism looking back to the social orders that developed in Europe between the Renaissance and the emergence of bourgeois political orders, and forward to a time when similar cultural aristocracies might be established' (Warren, 1988: 213).

46 An echo of Theognis' social hygienic recommendation is found in *GM* III, 14: 'That the healthy should not make the healthy sick … this would require above all else that the healthy remain *separated* from the sick, guarded even against the sight of the sick, that they not confuse themselves with the sick.'

47 Teuffel accurately observed that Theognis 'is an aristocrat body and soul, and as such hates everything monarchical', and that he also sees the people 'as a mass born for servitude' (Teuffel, 1852: 1849). Nietzsche shared both sentiments, but was prepared to assent to monarchical rule in order to offset democratic rule, which he saw as a Hydra-like monarchy of a thousand heads.

48 According to Norbert Elias, during the nineteenth century the 'antipolitical bias was turned against the parliamentary politics of a democratic state' (quoted in Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 293, note 7). Nietzsche may be considered to be 'anti-political' only in this restricted sense.

49 Nietzsche, *KSA* 13, 16 [39]. In an excellent article, Vanessa Lemm argued that Nietzsche granted to the aristocracy a purely spiritual authority. His aristocrats did not meddle in political affairs because they cared only for the spiritual and cultural elevation of the individual (Lemm, 2008: 367–8). In contrast, Manuel Knoll rightly points out that for Nietzsche 'the procreation of a higher human type is not primarily to be understood as the concern of an isolated individual, but as a social and political task' (Knoll, 2010: 21).

[50] In his early essay on Napoleon III, Nietzsche notes the 'new nobility' created by the French President on the basis of the army whom he called 'the elite of the nation' (Nietzsche, 1862: 56–7).

[51] Nietzsche's description of the aristocratic attitude coincides with Domna Stanton's: 'the aristocratic desire to construct the self as a work of art. Every signifier which the aristocrat can control – looks, clothing, gesture, manners, speech – will be recruited into the expression of his superiority' (Stanton, 1980: 5).

[52] In *HH*, Nietzsche acknowledges that wealth can also bestow aristocratic status. But this condition may be assimilated to birth because, among other advantages, wealth allows access to the most beautiful women. Wealth is thus the source of 'nobility by birth' (*Geblütsadel*), an 'aristocracy of race' (*HH* §479).

[53] Contrary to Abbey, Angela Holzer believes that Nietzsche becomes increasingly skeptical 'of the biological foundations of the existing *Adel* as a separate class', and that he therefore 'shifts the focus from the biological foundations of a distinguished but powerless class to the political dimension, that is to political power and agency implied by the term *Aristokratie*' (Holzer, 2007: 381). But in *BGE*, Nietzsche clearly associates the authority of aristocratic values (*der Herrschaft aristokratischer Werte*) with belief in *Herkunft* (*BGE* §32), which has to be read as pointing to biological foundations.

[54] Thomas Brobjer records that between 1885 and 1888, Nietzsche read and annotated Erdmann Gottreich Christaller's book *Die Aristokratie des Geistes als Lösung der sozialen Frage: Grundriss der natürlichen und vernüftigen Zuchtwahl in der Menschheit* (Brobjer, 1997: 691). In this book, Christaller devised ways to breed a new aristocracy.

[55] In Janz's opinion, Nietzsche did not take sides and did not identify with Theognis' aristocratic apology (Janz, 1987: 109; cf. Jensen, 2007). But when Nietzsche mentions him again in *GM*, it is clear that he had embraced Theognis' aristocratism despite the fact that he could no longer identify him with the Dorian aristocratic temper.

[56] It would perhaps be too strong to say that Nietzsche plagiarized what Wolfgang Menzel had written on Napoleon III in his two-volume historical account of Europe's political terrain between 1816 and 1856, but one can safely say that Nietzsche's essay was no more than a summary of Menzel's chapter on Napoleon III.

[57] Menzel rightly used the term *oktroierte* to refer to the genesis of the new French constitution. This accords with the exercise of the monarchical principle on the part of Napoleon III (Menzel, 1857: II, 408). Menzel also referred to the French constitution of 1814 as Louis XVIII's 'gift' to the people (Menzel, 1857: I, 4).

[58] There is no mistaking that Nietzsche remains a thoroughly modern thinker. For all his admiration of the classical world, particularly the Homeric aristocratic saga, he looks forwards, not backwards. As Maudemarie Clark observes, Nietzsche's overcoming of the morality in the narrower sense 'does not mean that he wants to go back to pre-moral forms of ethical life' (Clark, 1998: xix).

[59] Nietzsche here affirms his view of a higher morality while at the same time denying that it can be motivated 'by any morality or immorality'. This incongruence may be eliminated by distinguishing, as Berkowitz does, between morality understood as the mental attitude he despises (it paralyzes and denies life), and morality understood as a generic term that designates rules of behaviour (Berkowitz, 1995: 48; cf. Nehamas, 2003: 105).

[60] Clark and Dudrick acknowledge that this ending of *BGE* §19 is 'particularly puzzling … of which, to [their] knowledge, no one has ever attempted an account' (Clark and Dudrick, 2012: 176). If interpreters were not to assign a free-standing status to Nietzsche epistemology, but saw it as functioning at the service of his aristocratism, the ending of *BGE* §19 would make more sense. In this passage, Nietzsche, spurred by his nominalist conviction, develops a phenomenology of the will which reduces it to separate acts of willing (cf. Leiter, 2009: 108). These acts of willing are further reduced to a plurality of feelings accompanied by a muscular feeling (*Muskelgefühl*). Thought then appears as the element that completes this complex structure. At this point, Nietzsche's phenomenological account ends and a different consideration is introduced when he writes: 'In every act of the will there is a commandeering (*kommandierenden*) thought.' Beyond the complex of feeling and thinking, the will is defined above all as 'an affect: and specifically an affect of command [*Affekt des Kommandos*]', and the

freedom of the will is seen as 'the affect of superiority with respect to something that must obey'. The recognition that, within the soul, there is a hierarchical command/obedience relationship ('all willing is simply a matter of commanding and obeying'), supersedes the levelling tendency of the initial phenomenological description. A hierarchical relation is in place which is defined as follows: 'A person who wills, commands something inside himself that obeys.' How does Nietzsche interpret the will now subsumed under a command/obedience hierarchy? We may think that the one in us who commands is the same as the one who obeys. But the will is not is an irreducible unity; the will is not self-governed, understood as the democratic identity of rulers and ruled. 'There is will only where the effect of command, and therefore obedience, therefore action, may be expected.' Command implies a hierarchical architecture made of many souls: a commanding higher soul, and a number of 'under-souls'. We are, acknowledges Nietzsche, a 'society constructed out of many souls'. He sees the will as a 'happy commonwealth' where 'the ruling class identifies itself with the successes of the commonwealth'. Nietzsche concludes *BGE* §19 by claiming the right 'to understand willing itself within the framework of morality: morality understood as the doctrine of the power relations under which the phenomenon of "life" arises'. In doing so, Nietzsche leaves behind his initial naturalist description and, as Clark and Dudrick point out, assumes a higher normative stance. In their view, 'Nietzsche takes willing to be essentially connected to values' (Clark and Dudrick, 2012: 191).

61 In this respect, Jaspers rightly observes: 'Nietzsche attacks morality in every contemporary form in which he finds it, not in order to remove men's chains, but rather to force men, under a heavier burden, to attain a higher rank' (Jaspers, 1965: 140; cf. Williston, 2001: 366–8).

62 Dombowsky is unique among Nietzsche commentators to have seen the centrality of the relation of command and obedience in Nietzsche. In his view, the 'basic relationship of supremacy, of command (law or compulsion) and obedience defines morality itself and makes morality, by definition, political' (Dombowsky, 2004: 21). This reductivist approach leads Dombowsky to conclude that for Nietzsche 'all morality is essentially a form of politics' (Dombowsky, 2004: 11). He points out correctly that for Nietzsche the relation of command and obedience, when understood politically applies exclusively within an aristocratic context. The republican ideal of self-government, which implies the identity of rulers and ruled, goes against Nietzsche's radically anti-democratic animus. Dombowsky is again right is pointing out that Nietzsche's conception of 'sovereignty as decision and law as command' has affinity with Hobbes (Dombowsky, 2004: 22).

63 'All political constitutions imply relations of command and obedience, ruler and ruled. The point is where the power is vested' (Dombowsky, 2004: 21).

64 Julian Young rightly points out that 'the correlative of leadership, subordination, is not the same as oppression' (Young, 2010: 333). Some may willingly submit to others and become functional to their commanding wishes. A sports team and a voluntary military hierarchy are non-oppressive forms of subordination. Non-oppressive subordination takes place objectively when the notion of human equal dignity determines the legitimacy of human interactions. In *Gay Science* (*GS*), Nietzsche wrote that oppressive subordination could be experienced subjectively as non-oppressive when the masses submit to slavery, 'provided that the superiors constantly legitimize themselves as higher, as born to command, through noble manners' (*GS* §40; cf. *GS* §118 and §119). This is the virtue of aristocratism. Subordination implies oppression when the background conditions are democratic. Nietzsche believed that aristocratism made non-oppressive subordination possible.

65 In *BGE* §188, Nietzsche portrayed morality primordially as compulsion. Paradoxically, it is from compulsive authority that we can expect the emergence of free creative activity. Nietzsche referred to the discipline and long dedication required by athletes, dancers, painters and scientists to achieve the precision and perfection they aim for. Freedom is usually equated with spontaneity and *laisser aller*, which leads one to think of authority as anti-natural. The truth is that what is denounced as the tyranny of discipline is demanded by nature. 'Every artist knows how distant this feeling of letting himself is from his "most natural" state … and how strictly and subtly he obeys thousands of laws…'.

66 This account of the transition to morality proper is prefigured in Hegel's own account of the moral point of view and what precedes it historically. In accord with Nietzsche's description of the pre-moral period, Hegel, in his *Philosophy of Right*, writes: 'Earlier and more sensuous ages have before them

something external and given, whether this be religion or rights; but [my] conscience knows itself as thought, and that this thought of mine is my sole source of obligation' (*PhR*, §136 Addition). Whereas Nietzsche regards Socratic and Judeo-Christian moralities identical (cf. Jaspers, 1965: 141), Hegel, in the *Berne Fragments* and the *Positivity* essay, finds them incommensurable (cf. Beiser, 2005: 129–30).

67 Maudemarie Clark rightly postulates that Christian morality is morality in the narrower sense (Nietzsche, 1998: xx).

68 In these lectures, Nietzsche extolled the value of a classical education and of an exhaustive knowledge of one's mother-tongue. This education one could 'seldom attain to of one's own accord'. Everybody was required to be placed under the tuition of 'great leaders and tutors'. This need for leadership was the unifying theme of all five lectures: 'Every classical education has only one healthy and natural starting-point – an artistic, earnest and exact familiarity with the use of the mother-tongue … one can seldom attain this by oneself, but requires those great leaders and tutors, and must place oneself under their protection' (*KSA* I, 685–7).

69 Nietzsche agreed implicitly with Hobbes, who argued: 'Subjection, Command, Right and Power are accidents not of Powers but of Persons' (cf. Schmitt, 1985: 33–4). For a similar desiccated view of the political, cf. Guay, 2013.

70 In *GS* §335, Nietzsche observes how the categorical imperative 'crept stealthily into [Kant's] heart and led him astray – back to "God", "soul", "freedom" and "immortality"'.

71 'The leitmotif of Nietzsche's life and thought [is] the anti-political individual who seeks self-perfection' (Kaufmann, 1968: 418).

72 'Among [Nietzsche's] heroes there was not one he admired for conquests; all were men of surpassing intelligence, passionate men who mastered their passions and employed them creatively' (Kaufmann, 1967: 511).

73 One could perhaps express this by stating that the will to power is commander in chief. Those who obey it will become its delegate officers commissioned to command those who disobey the command to command. One ought to say that the will to power moves all living creatures to command and obey – some will have command over others, and these others will obey the former. The delegate commanders will obey, not the will to live, but the will to power.

74 Bernd Magnus warns us against metaphysical readings of the will to power: 'We must not understand Nietzsche to be saying that some transcendental metaphysical unity lurks behind the world' (Magnus, 1978: 22). Magnus follows Nietzsche in his own seeking to distance himself from Schopenhauer's theory of the will to life. Ivan Soll has convincingly shown that Nietzsche is not to be trusted in this respect.

75 Charles Taylor is right on the mark when he observes: 'Of course, one of the fruits of this counterculture was Fascism – to which Nietzsche's influence was not entirely foreign, however true and valid is Walter Kaufmann's refutation of the simple myth of Nietzsche as a proto-Nazi' (Taylor, 1999: 28). Taylor coincides in this respect with Ansell-Pearson when he writes: 'The real problem with the labelling of Nietzsche as a Fascist, or worse, a Nazi, is that it ignores the fact that Nietzsche's aristocratism seeks to revive an older conception of politics, one which locates in the Greek *agon* …' (Ansell-Pearson, 1994: 33).

76 One wonders though how Kaufmann could have missed the complete picture of Hobbes's conception of power. He states that, for Hobbes, 'power was essentially a tool, an instrument, a means for security' (Kaufmann, 1968: 360). But this is only part of what Hobbes has to say on the matter. In *Leviathan* X, he first defines power neutrally, as a mere instrument, namely as the 'present means to obtain some future apparent good'. But then he proceeds to give a political definition of power. This he does inconspicuously, which could explain why Kaufmann missed it (cf. Macpherson, 1981: 33–4).

77 One should also note that, as Maudemarie Clark persuasively shows, in *BGE* §36 Nietzsche presents his argument in hypothetical form.

78 Reginster inserts here a semicolon, in lieu of the comma one reads in the German original, to emphasize perhaps the distinction he attributes to Nietzsche.

[79] I agree with Dombowsky when he writes that to interpret Nietzsche's political philosophy 'without attunement to the positions of the political forces of his own period is inadequate. For example, reading Nietzsche's criticism of the German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck … in a way that would dissociate him from Nationalist Socialist ideology overlooks the obvious fact that Nietzsche's criticism of Bismarck comes from the Right' (cf. Dombowsky, 2004: 2; cf. Lotter, 208: 436).

[80] Cf. Warren, 1988; Thiele, 1990; Detwiler, 1990; Ansell-Pearson, 1994; Berkowitz, 1995; Appel, 1999; Widder, 2003; Dombowsky, 2004; Siemens and Roodt, 2008; Knoll and Stocker, 2014).

[81] According to Malinowski, the myth of leadership (*Führertum*) was one of 'the most important communicative bridges that brought the aristocracy and National Socialism together' (Malinowski, 2003: 489).

[82] Bauch refers to the study by Alois Riehl, who very early on noted Nietzsche's 'aristocratic, individualist tendencies' (Riehl, 1901: 158). (One should note that Bauch studied under Heinrich Rickert at Freiburg, and that Rudolf Carnap was his student at Jena.)

[83] I agree with Berel Lang that Nietzsche was not a fascist, did not advocate fascism and bears no personal responsibility for the rise of Mussolini, Hitler and their political movements (Lang, 2003); but I think it is legitimate to challenge the view of those who argue that Mussolini, Hitler and the radical right misinterpreted Nietzsche and grossly misappropriated central aspects of his thought. In this respect, I believe it is possible to bring the radical right to Nietzsche, and not the other way around (Lang, 2003: 52).

[84] Frank Cameron and Don Dombowsky observe that 'Nietzsche was "radical" because he was an opponent of the existing political order and "aristocratic" in claiming that society's goal should be the promotion of exemplary individuals' (Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 21).

[85] In the case of Mussolini, it is clear that, inspired by Nietzsche, he spurned his early democratic convictions and adopted a pro-aristocratic stance. Marguerita Sarfatti, Mussolini's mistress and biographer, reports that after Mussolini became acquainted with Nietzsche's thought, 'on his lips [began] to appear frequently and insistently the word "aristocracy"' (Sarfatti quoted in Sznajder, 2003: 252; cf, Lang, 2003: 51). In turn, Mussolini became an ideal model for European aristocrats between the wars. In 1928, German Count Andreas von Bernstorff wrote: 'Only a dictator can help us now, someone who will sweep away this international parasitic riffraff with an iron broom. If only, like the Italians, we had a Mussolini' (Malinowski, 2003: 244). Like Mussolini, Hitler in *Mein Kampf* rejected democracy and the Marxist view that 'man is equal to man'. He defended what he called the 'aristocratic principle', which he saw as necessary to secure 'the leadership of the best heads' (Hitler, 1937: 492–3; cf. Malinowski, 2003: 490). It is understandable that Prince Bernard von Sachsen-Meiningen could write to Nazi headquarters in 1931: 'I have been won over by … *Mein Kampf* and by the exemplary discipline that emanates from your Führer, Adolf Hitler' (Malinowski, 2003: 567). The affinity between Nazism and the European aristocracy is not evident at first sight. But lately, cultural historians have been able to document how large segments of the German aristocracy contributed to the rise of Nazism and its consolidation in power (cf. Urbach, 2007: 3). In this respect, Eckart Conze observes that only recently 'the ideas, expectations, and orientations that made possible the broad affinities between the aristocracy and National Socialism have been identified. These affinities must be counted among the major preconditions for the destruction of the Weimar Republic, the rise of National Socialism, and the stabilization of its power' (Conze, 2007: 129–30).

[86] According to Rudolf Künzli, the numerous short anthologies published after 1933, containing 'the essential Nazi sayings of Nietzsche', were only 'a small step away from the Nazi abuse of Nietzschean slogans'. These collections were published 'without any indication of an editor, in order to make believe that they were reading works by Nietzsche' (Künzli, 1983: 434). In the case of *ALG*, Würzbach entered his name as the editor of this particular collection and the texts selected were all authentic.

[87] Two titles make explicit reference to the battlefield, which is clear evidence that the aim of the series was to give young *Wehrmacht* officers and conscripts the possibility of carrying uplifting material in their knapsacks when mobilized to the front. The title of number 16 was: *Der alte Blücher schreibt aus dem Feld*; and that of number 34: *Th. Körner: 1813 (Briefe und Lieder aus dem Feld*).

[88] In a letter to Hans Johst, President of the *Reichsschriftumskammer*, an institution subsidiary to Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda, Würzbach would boast that 50,000 copies of *ALG* had been mailed to soldiers on the front line by 1942 (Würzbach correspondence, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfeld).

[89] The selected passages from Nietzsche's works were taken from: *The Future of our Educational Institutions* (Fifth Conference); *Human All Too Human* (Preface § 4; *Mixed Opinions and Sayings*, §311); *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (On Self-Overcoming; On War and Warriors; On Old and New Tables; The Stillest Hour); *Beyond Good and Evil* (§188; §199); *Notebooks* in *KSA*, 9, 128 [111]; 10, 213 [1]; 10, 278 [104]; 10, 452 [3]; 11, 76 [245]; 11,118 [405]; 11, 220 [268]; 11, 127–8 [436]; 11, 171 [85]; 11, 194 [172]; 11, 203–4 [205]; 11, 240 [344]; 11, 449 [88]; 11, 531 [44]; 11, 560–1 [22]; 11, 611–12 [13]; 13, 346 [161]; *Note-books* in Schlechta III, 801.

[90] Earlier, Nietzsche had been credited with the outbreak of the First World War. 'The legend that Nietzsche was a thinker who generated dangerous acts was now internationalized. As a later observer [Eric Vögelin] wrote, no other philosopher had been made responsible for a European war' (Aschheim, 1992: 128–9). The First World War was called the 'Euro-Nietzschean War' (Aschheim, 1992: 128; see also Kappstein, 1914; Krummel, 1974). Alfred Bäumler confirmed this view when he wrote at the conclusion of his book: 'How right were our enemies during the World War who saw the Germanic in Nietzsche, [namely] Siegfried's attack on Western urbanity' (Bäumler, 1931: 182).

[91] The publication of Würzbach's booklet coincided with Joachim Schondorff's book that also contained a selection of Nietzsche's texts. Schondorff's book bears a title that speaks for itself – *Friedrich Nietzsche, Sword of the Spirit: Words for German Warriors and Soldiers* (Schondorff, 1940; see Holub, 2003: 215–16). One should also note that during the First World War, 'about 150,000 copies of an especially durable wartime *Zarathustra* were distributed to the troops. Even Christian commentators were struck that *Zarathustra* had taken its place alongside the Bible in the field' (Aschheim, 1992: 135).

[92] Steven Aschheim, inspired by Derrida's anti-essentialism, observes the 'multifaceted qualities' of Nietzsche's thought, the 'contradictory penetration' of his influence, and the impossibility of assigning his work 'a single and clear authoritative meaning' (Aschheim, 1992: 2–3). He opposes Arno Mayer's claim that Nietzsche's thought functioned primarily as 'a rhetorical and ideological prop for late nineteenthcentury aristocratic interests'. Aschheim points out that the old regime aristocracy was repelled by Nietzsche's 'radical questioning of authority and tradition' and notes that he espoused an 'aristocratic ethos quite different from that of the hereditary classes and the landed gentry' (Aschheim, 1992: 5, 117). This refutation of Mayer works because Aschheim appeals to a single authoritative notion of aristocracy, one that is not tied to and exhausted by the concrete particularity of the old regime aristocracy. His approach thus allows for the possibility that, at other historical junctures, other aristocratic establishments may look more favourably on Nietzsche's aristocratic radicalism.

[93] On 7 June, shortly after his Berlin appointment, Würzbach signed with the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* and was transferred to Munich. He would hold this position until 26 September 1940.

[94] In a letter dated 14 May 1933 and addressed to Richard Kolb, Director of the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* at Munich, Würzbach wrote: 'Because of my latest lecture on [the radio programme] *Stunde der Nation* to commemorate the death of Schiller [9 May], I am being seen as one of the spiritual leaders of the national movement. Two publishers have offered me open contracts for all my radio talks' (Würzbach correspondence, Archives of the Bavarian *Rundfunk*, Munich. I owe this letter to Professor Dr Natascha Würzbach).

[95] Further confirmation of Würzbach's credentials as Nazi collaborator was the access he was given to publish articles on Nietzsche for the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official party newspaper (cf. Würzbach, 1934). Würzbach may be credited, at the very inception of Hitler's rule, with the task of presenting Nietzsche as a thinker closely akin to National Socialism (cf. Würzbach, 1933 and 1934), and broadcasting this on the *Rundfunk*, the most powerful propaganda tool employed by the Nazis.

[96] Preface to *ALG*: 'As Nietzsche's writings became accessible to wider circles at the turn of the century and only the titles of his works (*Beyond Good and Evil*, *Twilight of the Idols*, *Genealogy of Morals*, *Revaluation of All Values*) were known, a view was held for many decades that here all moral values were eradicated, that one could proclaim with relief: 'Nothing is true, everything is permitted!' (*Zarathustra* IV, The Shadow). This awful mistake barred the best minds of the epoch to approach

Nietzsche's works. The self-indulgent and the incontinent thought they could justify their miserable demeanor by quotes taken out of context. Only much later, and only in our own time, has it been possible to understand that what Nietzsche rejected and assailed was prevailing morality. He did so because of its weakness and because prevailing morality validated feeble, decadent life, while regarding healthy and elevated life as an enemy. But, 'morality is the doctrine of the order of rank among individuals' (*KSA* 11, 35 [5], 510), and whoever intends to establish a new order of rank, as Nietzsche did, ought to defend a morality different from the prevailing one – a stronger, strenuous morality, with new foundations and new aims. 'The instincts of decadence now dominate over the instincts of reaching higher … the will to nothingness rules over the will to life' (KSA 13, 14 [140] 323). Here lies the problem of morality as Nietzsche sees it. His task seeks a new interpretation of history and a re-evaluation – not devaluation – of all values. This was only an attempt, but this grandiose fragmentary work is indication enough. What Nietzsche says about leaders and followers here, allows one to see how strong and ground-breaking he intended his re-evaluation to be.'

97 In Nietzsche's ethics of command and obedience and his 'fondness for artillery analogies', von Martin detects a 'Prussian element' which connects him with Treitschke and Hegel (von Martin, 1941: 68–9). It also connects him with Napoleon. In *GS*, Nietzsche celebrated Napoleon's militarism and acknowledges that, with him, Europe had become more manly and was ready to enter 'the classic age of war' (*GS* §362; cf. *KSA* 11, 34 [203]).

98 In the preface to *ALG*, Würzbach referred to his book *Das Vermächtnis Friedrich Nietzsches: Versuch einer neuen Auslegung allen Geschehens und einer Umwertung aller Werte*, also published in 1940. It is clear that he saw *ALG* as an offshoot of that book. In that massive work, Würzbach compiled the fragments left behind by Nietzsche in his notebooks and which had been edited initially by Peter Gast in 1901 under the title *The Will to Power*. Despite its many shortcomings, it remains an important book, particularly in light of Würzbach's Nazi connections and the fact that its French translation has been used extensively by Nietzsche scholars in France. Würzbach's edition had been published in France by Gallimard in 1935 under the title *La Volonté de Puissance* (Würzbach, 1935; cf. D'Iorio, 1996: 129–35). Even today, this is the most diffused edition of Nietzsche's fragments in France and the most cited one. Richard Roos wrote in 1956: 'Si l'ouvrage n'y gagne pas en cohésion, il facilite en revanche, l'étude que reste á faire sur l'évolution de quelques thèmes précis à travers les trois périodes' (cited in D'Iorio, 1996: 135).

99 The theme of chapter 17 is prompted by a section in *Mein Kampf* titled *Führung und Gefolgschaft*. Hitler here observes that the strength of a political movement lies in the 'disciplined obedience with which members follow their leaders' (Hitler, 1937: 510).

100 Without acknowledgment, Kaufmann follows Würzbach when he labels the two main parts of *The Will to Power* thusly: *Critique of the Highest Values Hitherto* and *Principles of a New Evaluation* (Nietzsche, 1968: ix–x; see Holub, 2003: 219).

101 On a biographical note, I should point out that Würzbach saw himself related by marriage and birth to the German aristocracy. His young wife Dolly's parents were Baron Wilhelm Ludwig Gemmingen von Massenbach and Dolly Helene Amalie von Linden de Fontenilliat, both members of Munich's established nobility. Würzbach himself claimed that his natural (though not legal) mother was a Viennese countess whom his father had come to know in his business travels. The countess died when she gave birth to him, and the newborn was then adopted by his legal mother, his father's wife. Documents in the Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfeld, show that this was, of course, a convenient story concocted in 1933 when the Nazis discovered that his real mother, Clara Bellachini (or Berlach), was Jewish, and that both her parents were Jews from Poland. To avoid unemployment, he left Berlin and transferred to the *Rundfunk* in Munich. There he could find protection within the circle of his aristocratic friends and within the family relations of his wife Dolly. Though he publicized anti-Semitic views in his writings, his Jewish background was brought against him again in 1939. This led to his dismissal from the *Bayerische Rundfunk* in 1940 (cf. Natascha Würzbach, 2007). He was able to cling to his membership with the *Reichsschriftumskammer*, which allowed him to continue to publish (cf. Würzbach, 1942 and 1943), but was ultimately expelled from that institution as well. In 1943, the Gestapo dissolved the *Nietzsche Gesellschaft*, raided Würzbach's home and confiscated his archives (cf. Vogel, 2007: 26). He was accused of maintaining Jewish connections, though he himself consistently

denied this and disavowed himself of his Jewish ancestry. From the very beginning of the Nazi regime, fear that his real ancestry might be discovered by the Nazis may explain why he never became a Party member. The need to mix with aristocratic friends, marry an aristocratic woman and feign aristocratic ancestry may explain his desire to lead a life which he thought could show his affinity with Nietzsche's aristocratism.

[102] According to Schrift, Nietzsche shares Derrida's 'deconstructive critique of the subject as a privileged centre of discourse in the context of his project of delegitimizing authority' (Schrift, 2008: 1).

[103] For Nietzsche, epistemology did not have the status of a free-standing discipline but functioned at the service of his aristocratism. The idea that his epistemology was at bottom political epistemology is captured by Thiele when he observes that 'perspectivism is the name Nietzsche gave to [his] radically individualistic epistemology' (Thiele, 1990: 31).

[104] Much has been written about Nietzsche's abhorrence of the state. Kaufmann considers Nietzsche to be 'basically anti-political', and for that reason he 'opposed both the idolatry of the state and political liberalism' (Kaufmann, 1968: 412). Again, for Nietzsche, according to Leslie Paul Thiele, politics 'constitutes a threat to the individual. The purpose of the state … ought to be the cultivation of individuals. But this is never the case' (Thiele, 1990: 47). Other scholars refer indiscriminately to Nietzsche's 'anti-state animus' (Hunt, 1991: 43), to his 'critique of the state' (Brobjer, 1998; 306). A more balanced view is expressed by Don Dombowsky: 'Nietzsche does not reject all states or political constitutions, rather he rejects the democratic and socialist states … He praises, for example, the Greek state, the Roman state, the military (Bonapartist) state and his contemporary Russian state (under Tsar Alexander III)' (Dombowsky, 2001: 389).

[105] A decade ago, articles published by Thomas Brodjer and Alan Schrift in *Nietzsche Studien*, sparked a lively discussion (Brodjer, 1998 and Schift, 2000). Don Dombowsky (2001 and 2002; cf. Brobjer, 2001, and Schrift, 2002) convincingly responded to the claims made by those authors. In their anthology of Nietzsche's political commentary, Dombowsky, together with Frank Cameron, examine Nietzsche's political thought and demonstrate that it 'confronted the living political forces and power structures of the Bismarckian era [and] defined itself on a path of resistance with an obligation to rule' (Cameron and Dombowsky, 2008: 22).

[106] Nietzsche conceives democracy in classical terms as class rule. In *DTM*, he refers to it as 'the despotism of the plebeians' (*DTM*, 150). In vv. 667–82, an elegy to Simonides, Theognis 'in a concealed manner and by means of circumlocutions' (*DTM*, 150), describes the rule of the people in the following terms:

> vv. 677–80 *They seized property by force, and order has perished,*
> *And no more equitable tribute is for the common benefit,*
> *and porters now command* (*ἄρχουσι*)*, the bad above the good;*
> *I fear the waves will swallow up our ship*
> (*DTM*, 150)

[107] This reference to the 'monarchical principle' (Nietzsche, 1862: 54), by means of which the subject of constituent power stands above the constitution, coincides with Nietzsche's view of Napoleon I in *GS* §23 as the one who can claim exceptional rights and who can stand above morality (Dombowsky, 2014: 11; cf. Cristi, 2011).

[108] Because of the interest shown here by Nietzsche regarding what determines the social and political identity of a nation, Tracy Strong takes *BT* as 'the most obviously political of his books' (Strong, 1996: 133–4; cf. Losurdo, 2002: 5–78).

[109] According to Guay, Nietzsche 'does not privilege the political with respect to order of rank: in fact, he does just the opposite, distinguishing the political as especially uninteresting because order of rank has little to do with it' (Guay, 2013: 500). Guay quotes a passage from *GS* §358 where Nietzsche praises the Church for making room for orders of rank. But this interpretation disregards the fact that Nietzsche is referring to the modern state, a state which operates normatively, banishes political rule and necessarily delegitimizes any order of rank. When Nietzsche extols the Church as a 'structure of domination [*Herrschafts-Gebilde*]' he underlines its political function. Politics, as understood by Nietzsche, cannot

be reduced to the potential use of coercive force, for this would mistakenly assimilate his views to the liberal normativism he abhors.

110 Edouard Will, the first one to challenge Müller's thesis, detected here 'the temptation, that had become almost permanent in Germany, of seeing in Sparta, considered rightly or wrongly as the symbol of the Dorian, the pre-figuration of a hierarchical and militarized German state, clearly Prussia' (Will, 1956: 11–12; cf. Porter, 2000: 386, note 26).

111 According to Hubert Cancik, Nietzsche opposed those ideals to 'the achievements of Athenian culture' and aimed his archaism 'against democracy and in favour of aristocratic and tyrannical forms of government' (Cancik, 2005: 41). This should explain his preference for Sparta over Athens (Cancik, 2005: 147). Thomas Brobjer opposes Cancik on this point (cf. Brobjer, 2007: 219).

112 In a similar vein, Nietzsche wrote the following in his *UM*: 'the aim of humanity cannot lie in its end but only in its highest exemplars' (*KSA* I, 317). Brandes related this text to what Renan wrote in *Dialogues et Fragments Philosophiques*: 'En somme, la fin de l'humanité, c'est de produire des grands hommes; le grand œuvre s'accomplira par la science, non par la democratie … L'essentiel est moins de produire des masses éclairées que de produire de grands génies et un public capable de les comprendre. Si l'ignorance des masses est une condition nécessaire pour cela, tant pis' (Renan, 1888: 103; Brandes, 1972: 12–13; Dombowsky, 2004: 28). Renan wrote this in 1871, immediately after the Paris Commune. The Paris Commune should be seen as a context for Nietzsche's writings of this period. In the spring of 1871, Nietzsche was moved to tears when he heard about the (false) report that the Parisian Communards had burned down the Louvre (cf. Bergmann, 1987: 86). And Domenico Losurdo suggests that this book could have been better titled or subtitled: *The Crisis of Civilization from Socrates to the Paris Commune* (Losurdo, 2002: 16).

113 Nietzsche owes his early conception of the state to Burckhardt (cf. Regent, 2008: 635). Together with other political historians, like Treitschke and Sybel (whose lectures Nietzsche attended while a student at the University of Bonn), Burckhardt adhered to the agenda of the right-wing section of the National Liberal Party whose motto was *Bildung und Besitz*. These historians were conservative liberals who supported free trade policies combined with a strong government. They were suspicious of parliamentary democracy and the equalization of rights, and supported Bismarck's anti-socialist legislation. Typically, Burckhardt, as a staunch conservative, defends patrician authority, and, as a liberal, stands for individual freedom, particularly freedom of education. Alfred von Martin perceptively notices the conservative liberal duality characteristic of Burckhardt: 'Genuine authority cannot be grounded on the sheer reality of power. Authority, in its highest sense, is a conservative notion, which, in the case of Burckhardt, combines with a liberal notion of freedom to make up an anti-revolutionary *complexio*' (von Martin, 1941: 65; my translation).

114 In *TI*, Nietzsche confirmed this diagnosis. 'Democracy has always been the declining form of the power to organize: I have already, in *HH*, characterized modern democracy, together with its imperfect manifestations such as the "German Reich", as the decaying form of the state' (*TI* IX, §39).

115 *HH* §472 plays a crucial role in Tamsin Shaw's argument. Based on Nietzsche's claim that modern states 'must be perceived to be legitimate', she argues that for Nietzsche the state is the subject of 'normative authority' (Shaw, 2007: 4), that it 'requires normative consensus in order to rule', and that it 'must establish its authority by promoting the acceptance of laws, norms, and obligations' (Shaw, 2007: 3 and 13). It seems to me that Shaw's conception of legitimacy is too narrow in that she equates it with liberal normativity (cf. Schmitt, 2008: 136–9). Liberalism postulates the priority of rights and thus can only legitimize contractual authority. Shaw does not take into account that Nietzsche rejects the normative authority of the state not only because he is skeptical about attaining a non-coercive consensus, but also because he privileges non-contractual (charismatic and traditional) forms of authority.

116 According to Kaufmann, for Nietzsche, 'power means something specific … self-overcoming' (Kaufmann, 1968: 261). Will to power is the striving that requires us to 'sublimate' our impulses so as to organize our internal chaos and give style to our characters (Kaufmann, 1968: 480). Because Nietzsche constructs it not as a political, but as a psychological notion, it cannot accurately be described as a will to dominate others, but as an attempt at self-discipline, at transcending and perfecting oneself'

(cf. Kaufmann, 1968: 248–50). Self-mastery, and not the control or domination of others, is the primordial manifestation of the will to power.

117 This description of a predatory state matches the Dorian conquest of the Peloponnesus.

118 This is one aspect of Nietzsche's counter-Enlightenment irrationalism. According to Habermas, Nietzsche 'unmasks reason as absolute purposive rationality, as a form of depersonalized exercise of power' (Habermas, 1987: 44).

119 Nietzsche has a deontological conception of authority. One obeys authoritative commands because they are authoritative. As soon as external reasons to obey are brought forth, authority loses deontological legitimacy. In this respect he stands in stark opposition to Benjamin Constant's deontological conception of the rule of law.

120 My use of the Weberian taxonomy to analyse Nietzsche's concept of authority is justified by the fact that Weber is in debt to Nietzsche in this respect. According to Horst Baier, 'Weber's doctrine of charismatic authority is immediately determined by Nietzsche's perception of political Caesarism' (Baier, 1981/1982: 26; cf. McGuinn, 1975: 109 and 112). Nietzsche does not explicitly distinguish between forms of authority, but Weber's taxonomy is implicit in his acceptance of traditional authority in *TI*, in his estimation for the authority that issues from an exceptional commander like Napoleon, and in his denunciation the 'hypocrisy of the commanding classes' in contemporary Europe, who wield formal juridical authority to protect themselves from their 'bad conscience' (*BGE*, §199).

121 Respect for traditional authority is one of the teachings Theognis imparted to his disciple Cyrnus. Nietzsche acknowledged that Theognis 'never intended to offer advice, as if in the position of a teacher' (*DTM*, 140). What Theognis did was simply 'to transmit through this young man … the ancient teachings of the aristocracy' (*DTM*, 143). Nietzsche acknowledges that 'there was among the nobles the richest abundance of precepts and instructions for a life of moral rectitude, in accordance with the basic principles of the aristocracy and transmitted from ancestors to their children and descendants' (*DTM*, 161). Generally, traditional authority translates into aristocratic regimes, charismatic authority coincides with monarchy and formal juristic authority with democracy.

122 Peter Sedgwick determines that the authority of tradition is manifested in the observance of norms, since 'all people are necessarily rule followers' (Sedgwick, 2007: 216). Customary observance of tradition constitutes a 'field of normativity' that initially manifests itself as 'thoughtless obedience to custom'. But, beyond this, customary normativity 'creates the conditions that give rise to critical self-reflection' (Sedgwick, 2007: 226). In this way, Sedgwick believes he can counter Habermas's claim that Nietzsche is a thinker of the counter-Enlightenment. My understanding of normativity differs from Sedgwick's.

123 Weber's taxonomy is employed by Carl Schmitt to define normativism, which he undertsands as the rule of pure rationality, the rule of abstraction and generality. Normativism expresses the domination of *ratio* over *voluntas*, of objectivity over subjectivity, of *Lex* over *Rex*.

124 Commenting on this passage, Alfred von Martin rightly observes a similarity to Carl Schmitt's decisionism (von Martin, 1941: 93).

125 Cf. Tamsin Shaw (2007).

126 Nietzsche writes in the *Notebooks*: '*Ich habe keinen Menschen kennen gelernt, den ich in den allgemeinsten Urteilen als Autorität empfunden hätte: während ich ein tiefes Bedürfnis nach einem solchen Menschen hatte*' (*KSA* 11, 26 [460]).

127 In contrast to Shaw, I conceive the notion of authority as intrinsically normative (Shaw, 2007).

128 Recently, this position has been brilliantly defended by Vanessa Lemm, in Lemm, 2008: 370 and 373.

129 In 1890, Brandes linked Nietzsche's aristocratism to that of Renan and Flaubert. He quoted from a letter sent by Flaubert to George Sand on 30 April 1871: 'The only rational thing is a government by Mandarins, provided the Mandarins know something – in fact, great many things … It is of little importance that a few peasants should be able to read and no longer listen to their pastors, but it is infinitely important that many men like Renan and Littré be able to live and be listened to. Our only salvation is a real aristocracy' (Brandes, 1890: 59). In another letter to George Sand (7 October 1871), Flaubert would write: 'Free compulsory education will do nothing but swell the number of *imbeciles*.

Renan has said that superbly, in the preface to his *Questions contemporaines*. What we need most of all is a *natural*, that is to say, a legitimate, aristocracy. Nothing can be done without a brain, and universal suffrage as it now exists is more foolish than divine right' (Flaubert, 1982: 183).

130 As early as 1901, Aloys Riehl noted Nietzsche's 'aristocratic, individualist tendencies' (Riehl, 1901:158). In agreement with Riehl, Bruno Bauch, a neo-Kantian philosopher, articulated in 1921 Nietzsche's aristocratic convictions and contempt for democratic equality (Bauch, 1921: 15).

131 When Nietzsche wrote: 'We "conserve" nothing; neither do we want to return to any past' (*GS* §377), he was describing his own deracinated lifestyle and not necessarily a politically anti-conservative stand (cf. Von Martin, 1941: 78). In any case, his politics showed up when he went on to write: 'We don't need to plug our ears to the marketplace's sirens of the future: what they sing – "equal rights", "free society", "no more masters and servants" – has no allure for us.'

132 Nietzsche distinguishes between aristocracy and democracy along the following lines: 'Aristocracy represents the belief in an elite humanity and higher caste. Democracy represents the unbelief in higher men and elite society: "everyone is equal to everyone else", "at bottom we all are self-interested cattle and rabble"' (*KSA* 11, 26 [281], 224).

133 In *SE*, Nietzsche proclaims that 'humankind must work continually at the production of individual great men – that and nothing else is its task' (*KSA* I, 383–4). Our aim, according to Nietzsche, is not the happiness of all, or the greatest number. Our duty is to provide favourable conditions for the birth of the great redeemers. We should be ready to sacrifice our lives, not for the state, but for another man, the great man. In this way, our lives will retain value and significance, and not be wasted. To live for the good of 'the rarest and most valuable exemplars' – this is the disposition that should be implanted and fostered in every young person. In what seems to be a pre-announcement of the *Übermensch*, Nietzsche thinks young persons should be able to say: 'I see something above me, higher and more human than I' (*Höheres und Menschlicheres über mir*) (*KSA* I, 385). Nietzsche anticipates the rise of a man of boundless vision and power, a man who, through his universality, would be one with nature and be 'the judge and evaluator of existence' (*Richter und Wertmesser der Dinge*). Those who rest their hopes in such a great man will receive their 'first initiation into culture' (KSA I, 385). In *Cities of Words*, Stanley Cavell offers a different reading of this passage. He thinks that when Nietzsche refers to 'the rarest and most valuable exemplars', he is not contemplating *another* person, but our own higher self (Cavell, 2004: 220). I consider this to be a convoluted distortion of what Nietzsche is saying here.

134 Dahl coincides with Schumpeter and his economic conception of democracy, according to which democracy is only a means and not an intrinsic end (cf. Taylor, 2012).

135 In contrast, Burckhardt distrusted Napoleon. He saw in him a provincial parvenu who lacked every social grace and sought to exercise raw military power. In his preference for the nobility of Talleygrand, embodiment of the gentler if venal aristocratic ethos of the *ancien régime*, one can see how he differed from Nietzsche's more radical aristocratism (cf. von Martin, 1941: 150).

136 The twelve-year-old Nietzsche first learned about Goethe from his friend Wilhelm Pinder's father, and about Napoleon from his grandmother Erdmuthe Krause (Janz, 1978: 53, 62–3; Bergmann, 1987: 16; Bertram, 2009; 18; Young, 2010: 15).

137 In *DTM*, Nietzsche writes: 'the plebeian man, who has already inherited from his parents a defective nature and disposition, is not only completely unable to restore it and improve it, but in his dealings and familiarity with evil men, as an adult, he becomes corrupt by the day' (*DTM*, 161).

138 Similarly, Barbara von Reibnitz believes that 'with the Theognis theme Nietzsche gains a Greek model of aristocracy … he opens for himself an entry into Greek antiquity [*Archaik*]' (Reibnitz, 1992: 13; cf. Wollek, 2010: 284).

Friedrich Nietzsche
ON THEOGNIS OF MEGARA[1]
De Theognide Megarensi

Translated by Oscar Velásquez

I On matters about Theognis and the Megarians at that epoch
1. A sketch of the political upheavals of the Republic of Megara in the sixth century
2. Theognis' lifespan is calculated
3. Particular circumstances of his life can be inferred from his own poems
4. Welcker envisioned Theognis' life in a different order

II On Theognis' poems
5. The fate of his poems and the judgments of the Ancients
6. Views of recent authors on Theognidean poetry
7. Theognis did not name the poems he composed 'A Collection of Maxims' (γνωμολογία)
8. These elegies were not composed in a particular and circumscribed part of his life
9. Theognis expresses in these elegies the feelings and impressions of his mind, but never intends to impart precepts the way a teacher does
10. Similarly, the convivial poems must not be ascribed to a particular period of his life
11. On some techniques of Theognidean poetry
12. The topics of the convivial poems are laid down
13. On Cyrnus and the elegies composed for him

III Theognis' opinions about gods, customs and public institutions are examined

14. Why are his views on public institutions, gods and men linked through close ties?
15. What is the foundation of the Greek nobility's dignity and authority?
16. Did Theognis' opinions remain constant in the midst of all upheavals?
17. What signs in the elder Theognis might indicate to us that he somehow modified his original judgements?

Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker[2] to this day retains, in his own right, the first place in issues regarding Theognis, since he was a pioneer in tackling the task of making transpositions in the poems and distributing them in a better concatenation.[3] After collating most diligently all the testimonies of the Ancients – often scattered and discordant – and reflecting on them with the utmost dedication, discarding some and amending others, he had a more accurate and correct judgment than previous editors, on the quality of the Theognidean poetry, on the times of the poet, and on Megarian society. Let no one believe that these issues have already been resolved by that very learned man so that practically nothing new may be added. One need only remember that the philologists' disputes of our time have not been resolved, especially that concerning the critical method to be used with Theognis,[4] to the point that Bernhardy has said that a vast field of critical examination and conjecture lies open on Theognidian matters.[5]

I could not but agree with the other views advanced by Welcker, although I am afraid I cannot accept the following two claims: one, something he said about the life of Theognis, that it should be investigated in line with his poems, which I doubt I could not determine with much greater certainty and accuracy; two, that he supposed that most of the poems ascribed to Theognis today, especially all convivial and drinking poems, should be rejected, and rather insisted emphatically in showing that the genre of his poetry was generally gnomic. Besides, no one to my knowledge has attempted to elucidate the importance of Theognis in knowing the ethical mentality of his time, although the footsteps of Welcker should have been followed in this regard – reflecting with the greatest effort on these issues, Welcker was the first to offer a new and correct opinion about the civic use of the words ἀγαθός and κακός.

Allow me first, then, to investigate carefully Theognis' times and the social order of the Megarians, before proceeding to discuss Theognis' writings; to examine the real name of his works more precisely, the layout, the topic. Finally, by investigating the poems, I shall account for the ethical mindset of the age during which Theognis' work blossomed.

Yet, taken aback by a certain feeling of abashment, I still struggle laboriously on the threshold of scholarship in challenging such an eminent man and opposing him on many issues, I admit that I have no excuse other than to seek to express my gratitude for my inspiration in the study of Theognis, so that I may follow his path with diligence, and that I may with humility report, if he may seem to stray.

I On the affairs of Theognis and the Megarians in that epoch

1. In the city of Megara, as in almost every city of the Dorians, the supreme authority and the administration of rites was controlled by the nobility, who since ancient times confined the common inhabitants to living in bordering territories, remote from the capital city and struck by poverty and ignorance. But gradually, when commerce with the colonies founded in fertile regions flourished, from which riches and luxuries flowed back to the mother-city, dissensions arose between the optimates and the plebeians. Hence it happened that Theagenes, seconded by the masses, whose favour he had attracted, seized public authority, using a cunning procedure similar to that of almost all tyrants [cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I 2, 19; *Politics* V 4, 5]. But if we were to ask in what period of time this occurred, nothing at all can be ascertained, except that Theagenes exerted his tyranny when Cylon was striving for the political control of Athens. The year he was expelled by the optimates cannot be determined, although it probably happened around 600 BC.

Since most of Theognis' life occurred during this sixth century, it is necessary to gather first the testimonies of the Ancients, from whom we may learn something about the state of public affairs of the Megarians at that time. It is clear that these testimonies are scarce and of little value.

During the war which broke out in the year 570 between the Athenians and the Megarians over the island of Salamis, the military operation resulted in an uncertain outcome, so that both cities selected Spartans as arbitrators.

These, having assembled a council composed of five men, assigned this island to the Athenians, although the Megarians were by blood closer to the Salaminians and were similar to them in the way they conducted their public affairs.

In the year 559 – set down by Clinton and Rochette – the Megarians founded the colony of Heraclea Pontica.[6] Having organized there many other Dorian institutions as well as the phylae,[7] in the same way as they were divided in Megara, which seems to show – something that Plaß conjectured in *De tyrannide* I, 84[8] – that, after the expulsion of Theagenes, most of the aristocracy [*majorem partem optumatium*], abused by members of the popular party, emigrated from the confines of the territory and sought new homes. Perhaps, because of this, tempers were calmed for some time, as the people saw that so many nobles had abandoned their homeland.

There are three passages of great importance in Plutarch and Aristotle that it is necessary to quote.

> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae* 18: *Once the Megarians expelled the tyrant Theagenes, they were judicious for some time with respect to the administration of government; then, when demagogues offered them the nectar of an excessive and immoderate freedom they became extremely corrupt and began attacking the rich shamelessly; and breaking into their houses, the poor claimed the right to feast and drink sumptuously, and if they could not get away with it, they violently and abusively grabbed everything. And finally, by means of an edict, they demanded back from lenders reimbursement of the interests to those who happened to have paid them. This action was called 'reimbursement of interests'* (παλιντοκία).

> Aristotle, *Politics* V 4, 3: *And in like manner democracy was abolished in Megara. For the demagogues, to be able to confiscate property, expelled many of the notables* (γνωρίμων), *thus creating many fugitives. But those who returned, overcame the people in a battle, and established an oligarchy*. V 2, 6: *And the democracy of Megarians was destroyed when it succumbed to disorder and anarchy*.

> Aristotle, *Politics* IV 12, 1: *Either all or some of the citizens were eligible; or were elected by all or some, or by property, lineage, virtue, or by some other qualification; as at Megara where only those who returned from exile and had fought jointly against the popular party were eligible*.

According to these passages, it is clear that not long after the expulsion of Theagenes a new conflict between the aristocracy [*optumatium*] and the plebeians arose, or to put it more accurately, between the rich and the poor, since when Theagenes got hold of the supreme power, many of the common people acquired riches, while numerous nobles were deprived of their fields and resources. In this conflict, it is true, the people came out victorious, but soon they became corrupt and dissolute by the action of seditious men to the

point that they instituted a παλιντοκία – by which it was decreed that what had been charged as interests should be returned by creditors to debtors –; they assaulted houses and demanded hospitality, to the point that eventually many nobles were stripped of their property and expelled from their territory. Those who, for a considerable time, had been living in exile finally gathered together and returned to their motherland, engaged in battle, seized and retained the supreme power of the city. But it will not be possible to determine the time in which this may have happened; all we know is that in the year 510 the optimates had already regained their power, since in that year, and in the following ones, the Spartans crossed the Isthmus, very often without impediment, to expel Hippias from the kingdom that he had usurped – this would not have happened, if at that time the supreme affairs of the state had been in the hands of the people's party. The aristocrats, moreover, maintained a permanent dominion from that year until the time of the Persian Wars and thereafter, although not even this much can be established with certainty through reliable testimonies. But tradition reports that in the year 468 the nobles [*nobiles*] were banished again by the plebeians, and that sovereignty was restored to the masses [*multitudinis*].

2. In this intervening period of time, which I have tried to outline to the best of my ability, lived Theognis, which, if we follow the order of events we have observed, cannot be more accurately described than is allowed by the few testimonies of the Ancients. But there is no source from which to corroborate the facts of his life, other than a few passages of Suidas[9] and other writers and, above all, from the works of the poet himself. The year of the poet's birth appears in Suidas: 'Theognis, born in the 59th Olympiad.' If we interpret γεγονὼς as 'natus' this is impossible to accept, because the *Chronicle* of Jerome notes: 'During the 59th Olympiad the poet Theognis became famous'; and the *Paschal Chronicle* notes: 'During the 57th Olympiad, the poet Theognis is acknowledged'; and Cyril, in *Contra Julianun* I, 13, records: 'During the 58th Olympiad, Theognis acquired fame.' So either Suidas was wrong or did not intend to mean by the word γεγονὼς other than that Theognis 'was living at that time' or 'became famous'.[10]

If, from the passages that I have introduced, it should be regarded as certain that around the 58th Olympiad the poet began to be famous, it is improbable that this happened before he reached the age of twenty; nor can it

have occurred long after that year, since Theognis was alive and quite old in the year 479. For this reason, we can determine that the poet died not long before his ninetieth year; which may not seem credible, since the Ionians – as it is possible to deduce from a fragment of Mimnermus – seldom appear to have lived over the age of seventy. The Attics, and perhaps also their Megarian neighbours, lived over eighty, as we learn from the extant verses of Solon (Bergk, 20).[11] We are forced, then, to reduce the number of years that we have set down, and restrict them within narrower limits.

It is therefore necessary to examine whether Theognis poet was really alive in the year 479; this can only be concluded from the vv. 773–82. In them, the poet implores Phoebus to ward off the city from the advancing Persian army, so that the people, with the arrival of spring, could send hecatombs and, with singing and votive games, celebrate the feast of the gods in accordance with the rites. He himself is fearful of the discord (στάσιν λαοφθόρον)[12] arisen among the Greeks. Duncker considers that these verses cannot refer to another year.[13] But why not?

Apart from these verses, vv. 757–68 seem to refer to the Persian Wars – in these verses the poet cheerfully and playfully extends an invitation to drink:

vv. 764–8 *not fearful of the Median war,*
far from worries we spend our lives joyfully
enjoying ourselves, and casting away vile fatalities,
dreadful old age and death's finality.

Would the poet really have written these lines when a threatening war was imminent? Was that a time to drink? And what does the poet suppliantly pray for? He implores the gods to avert old age. Is this what a nonagenarian poet begs for?

I think these verses belong to a completely different time, the time of the expedition led by Harpagos, which he very likely undertook in the year 546. It was then that terror overcame the Greeks, as is recalled by Theognis in the alluded passage, and also famously by Herodotus. At that time, the Greek cities in Europe feared that the Persians would insist in their intention to occupy cities; this is when discord arose among the people, referred to as στάσις λαοφθόρος. Then, the young poet wished for nothing better than enjoy his lovely youth, and that old age and death be as distant in time as possible.

We must move back from the years that we have set down, but not beyond the year 484, when Gelo, the tyrant of Syracuse, took Megara Hyblaea by

assault. This is also mentioned in Suidas: ‘Theognis of Megara in Sicily. He wrote an elegy about those who were saved in the siege of the Syracusans.’ Müller, *Die Dorier*, II, 509, wants these words to mean that Megara Hiblaea was besieged, and that ‘of the Syracusans’ should be interpreted as a subjective genitive.[14] I very much agree with this, although I concede that the order of the words is unusual. Suidas is wrong when he notes that Gelon occupied Syracuse; he did not seize the city by force – it was entrusted to him by the people, who spontaneously passed it over to him for protection. Megara was taken (Herodotus VII, 156) around the 74th Olympiad, that is, the year 483–4. Therefore, Theognis was still alive in 484, maybe even the following year. Thus, we have determined that the poet gained celebrity *c*.543, was born perhaps *c*.563, and died in 483 or shortly after.

Theognis undoubtedly was among the exiled aristocrats, since before his exile he fought bitterly against the popular party and its political institutions. He himself recalls that at the time his youth was already slipping away, and he was haunted by poverty and the insults of the slanderers.

vv.1129–1132 *Heart-breaking poverty does not bother me,*
or hostile men, who speak evil of me.
But I am grieved over my beloved youth slipping away,
and weep at the imminence of a dreadful old age.

Although judging from the calm tone of voice that the poet uses in these verses, we can infer that, at that time, Theognis was not grieved by these afflictions as vehemently as many poems suggest he once was. It seems, then, that these verses were composed at the beginning of that conflict when, defeated and deprived of his property, he left and went into exile. But this is only evident after the poet turned thirty years, that is, this poem was not written before the year 533 (because of the words ‘*beloved youth slipping away*’). So all we can do is determine that, between 530 and 510, Theognis not only sought exile, but also visited Sicily, Euboea, Sparta, and then returned home.

It remains to compare what Theognis conveys about the political organization of the Megarians and their political upheavals with a few testimonies from Plutarch and Aristotle.

This is easy to understand when you look at the words to be compared written side by side.

Aristotle’s Politics	Theognis

V. 4, 3: *For demagogues … to be able*	v. 46 *in favour of their own profit and power*
to confiscate property	v. 50 *profits that come with public disgrace*
Plutarch's *Quaestiones Graecae*	Theognis
18: *The poor… violently and abusively grabbed everything … And finally, by means of an edict, they demanded the lenders reimbursement of interest*.	v. 677 *they seize property by force, and order has perished* v. 678 *and no more equitable tribute is for the common benefit*
18: *they were judicious – having demagogues offer them the nectar of excessive and immoderate freedom, they became extremely scorrupt*	v. 41 *since these fellows are still sensible – but their leaders* v. 42 *have changed, to fall into deep evil* Cf. vv. 44–5

Although the sentences in these verses may seem rather obscure, we should never forget that they were written under the most atrocious tyranny, to the point that the poet may have been forced to use symbols when free expression and discourse, so to speak, had been hindered by terror. The poet himself ends that poem describing the desperate state of the city with the image of an endangered ship:

vv. 681–2 *Let these words be expressed in riddles to the good;*
but anyone who is bad will also understand this, if he is wise.

3. I have searched out the period in which the poet lived, and have applied myself to calculate the years of his life. I have briefly described the political situation in Megara – which Theognis tackled in his poems. It is necessary to relate more accurately each of the events alluded to in the poems, and arrange them in a precise order – I regret that this issue, important as it is, was neglected by Welcker.

It is clear, then, that Theognis, born of noble family, devoted his time as a young man to the pleasures of leisure, since in this epoch the Megarian nobles were unworthy of the integrity of ancient customs, and corrupted by extravagance and complacent behavior. This youthful cheerfulness of mind and levity are mentioned in:

v. 1122 *With youth and wealth warming up the soul*
v. 1153 *May I be blessed with wealth, without harm and evil-free*
v. 567 *Enjoying my youth while having fun*

But social disruption had already begun to undermine the republic, and he was not permitted to live a safe and enjoyable life any more. As the days went by, he observed that the principles according to which he had been formed since childhood were despised by the plebeians and also by the aristocrats. This was so, particularly, when he realized that the noble blood was being contaminated by conjugal unions with new people. He then undertook with outmost indignation his struggle against the evils that hung threateningly upon the political system, and reproved the unworthy nobles with harshness, and attacked the common people with burning hatred. But nothing afflicted more his somewhat haughty spirit and his aroused indignation than the fact that, as a way to save his life, he was forced to interact more intimately with the common people and to favour unwillingly their purposes. Only this is known, that he, in order to save his own property**,** while the wealth of others was being seized by the popular party, strove for some time to ingratiate himself with the common people; in that, he seems to have been successful at first, for he wrote:

vv. 831–2 *By trusting I lost my possessions, and by distrusting I kept them,*
but being aware of both makes one bitter.

He deceived himself, since his adversaries, who perceived that his love for nobility was hardly hidden by an apparent popular spirit, seized his property and put his life in the greatest jeopardy.

v. 1106 *Oh miserable me, and certainly the object of mockery to my enemies*.

Oppressed by extreme penury, ridiculed by his enemies, vexing to his friends, even betrayed by them – something he bitterly complains about –, Theognis decided to flee and, at first, hesitated as to whether he should take his wife Argiris with him – should I understand this correctly – and proposed the same to the adolescent Cyrnus, whom he loved with fatherly affection, whether perhaps he would want to endure with him the fatigue of travel and flight. There is insufficient evidence to say whether they followed him or not. In Boeotia he expected to be graciously received by the aristocrats of the city of Lebadea, as he could recollect that the Megarian nobles had been assisted by the Boeotians most effectively in the foundation of Pontic Heraclea in the year 559. If he really went there, I dare not affirm. What he himself remembers is that he lived for a long time in Sicily and was honoured with the citizenship of Megara Hyblaea; this is also confirmed by

the testimony of Suidas, as we have already mentioned, and by Plato's *Laws* I 630, where he is called 'a citizen of the Megarians in Sicily'. This prompted the error of the first editors of Theognis, who determined that the poet had been born in Megara Hyblaea.[15] But it can be shown by many examples that men distinguished for their reputation in arts and letters were designated citizens of the colonies and their metropolises, as Archilochus of Paros and Thasos, Protagoras and Hecataeus the Young, of Teos and Abdera, Terpander of Boeotia and Lesbos, Mimnermus of Colophon and Smyrna.

He himself acknowledges that he tolerated his exile in Sicily moderately well, and if anyone wonders what his condition was, he bids to say:

v. 520 *well, but with difficulty; with difficulty, though not well* (cf. Gerber, 1999: 247, note 3)

The misfortune of exile seems diminished especially by the fact that the aristocrats [*optumates*] in exile always endeavoured, by mutual dealings and according to a common plan, to return to their homeland and regain their former status. It seems that Theognis left Sicily by ship and arrived in Euboea, an island whose nobles, holders of opulence and luxury, welcomed the exiled in a magnificent and splendid manner. He spent the last part of his exile in Sparta, at the seat of the nobility, where the exiles hoped that they would likely receive help against their hostile fellow citizens [*contra suos malos cives*]. It does not seem credible that these exiles would invade their homeland with their own military force without the help of others, would vanquish the popular party [*plebem*] and regain control of the government.

These are almost all the attested events that we know for certain about Theognis' life before and during his exile. There remains to be examined carefully what the poet suggests about the latter part of his life, which were a few and not greatly serious comments. He was involved in public affairs more sparingly than before, so that his own anger and hatred against the people seemed to have faded away. He was much distressed by the fierce calamities through which the aristocrats [*optumates*] were ravaged in two cities, Cerinthus and Megara Hyblaea, which we have already mentioned. These people had been most friendly to him and well-deserving in relation to his own welfare. Moreover, as an old man he increasingly dissociated himself from the severe rules that he had supported during his youth, of which we may recognize some signs.

We have already said that nothing is known about his death. It is likely to have taken place shortly after the year 484, when he heard the announcement

that Megara had been captured by Gelo, which consumed him with pain and sadness.

4. After having sketched a few aspects of the life of Theognis, we should approach Welcker, who arranges each of the events in a totally different way, and orders them in a new sequence. In his book, he makes it amply and ostensibly clear that Theognis was among the exiled aristocrats and wrote at the time in which their supremacy, restored after the defeat of the people in battle, would have been reclaimed by plebeians, who would have retained it until the 89th Olympiad. If the poet, having returned with the multitude of survivors – a very dubious thing – had regained his patrimony, then surely it would have been taken away from him again. So, as he saw plebeian owners enjoying themselves, while honours were granted to men who had previously been banned from government and, furthermore, that noble blood was being defiled by marriages with new men, having voluntarily yielded to the winning faction the right to intermarriage, his indignation seems to have turned into verse.

What happens then? Are the events not astonishingly torn apart?

Undoubtedly many difficulties arise, of which it suffices to choose the most serious one. In the year 510, the supreme power was in the hands of the optimates; Welcker thinks that after that year all those evils against which Theognis bitterly inveighed began to creep gradually into public administration. But what did the poet do before this year? Did he write anything? He had undoubtedly written: he sent elegies to Cyrnus from exile (v. 1197). And even before his exile he wrote the following verses:

vv. 53–60 *Cyrnus, this city is certainly still a city, but its people are different;*
those men who previously knew neither judgments nor laws,
but wore goatskins on their sides,
and spread outside this city like deer:
they are now the good, son of Polypaides; and those
formerly noble
are now base: can anyone endure this sight?

These verses cannot have been written to serve as reference to the civil upheavals Welcker mentioned because, before those perturbations, plebeians lived in the countryside wrapped up in furs, fleeing the city much like deer. This does not square with historical facts, for plebeians had already invaded the city during the first republican uprising and surrendered themselves to lust and indulgence for a long time. It seems that these verses describe the

state of things in the city before Theognis' exile. For at that time already, 'the formerly low-born' had usurped the position of 'the good': it was then that the goods owned by Theognis were taken from him by force:

vv. 346–8 *They hold my possessions, taken away by force.*
While I, like a dog crossing the ravine
in its winter torrent, shook off everything.

It was then that Theognis, afflicted by the greatest need, composed these elegies, in which poverty (πενίην) was cursed most vehemently.

What have we proved? That what, in the opinion of Welcker, the poet suffered after his exile he had already suffered before exile, so that all the events, shall we say, were being repeated.

But what necessity spurs us to form such a contorted interpretation? Are there verses in which the poet would seem to imply this repetition of events? Since they do not exist, nothing urges us to do so.

I do not deny that the methodology I used to narrate poet's life does not correspond altogether with the judgements and strategies of those who, aside from Welcker, have narrated, either incidentally or in more detail, the life of the poet. Virtually every one of them has followed their own path in this matter, some in a more ingenious way, others acutely and more in line with historical facts. So, K. O. Müller: '*In a violent redistribution of landed property, Theognis, who was away on a sea voyage, was stripped off the rich patrimony of his parents*.' But this sea-voyage (ναυτιλίη) (v. 1202), the sole word from which this conjecture emerged, is exile itself, although no one can infer this from Müller's words.

What remains is the task of gathering and repeating succinctly the events described:

563?	Theognis is born at Megara (cf. Gerber, 1999: 167–75)
543?	The poet wins celebrity for the first time
533	He begins the fight against the popular faction
530–510	Deprived of his property and abated by deprivation he goes into exile; spends time in Sicily, Euboea, Sparta. He returns with other exiles, and regains his former status once the plebeians were defeated in battle.
506	In an elegy, deplores the expulsion of the nobles at Cerinthus by the popular faction (cf Gerber, 1999: 303).
484	He composes an elegy about Megara Hyblaea seized by Gelo. He dies not long after this.

II On the writings of Theognis

5. For a long time and on many occasions, I have hesitated whether specifically to follow the judgements of Xenophon and Isocrates on the poetry of Theognis, or the tracks of our scholars in this extremely controversial issue. I do not know really whether those closest to his epoch have interpreted him more correctly than what we, more recent scholars, have. It is no small obstacle to have to guess from a miserable farrago of poems, rather than from complete and intact poems, as did the ancient writers. Memory is feeble and the data scarce, as we have reported, not only about his times and the condition of his homeland, but also about his life. Since recently I have delved deeply into Theognidean issues, and have scrutinized Theognis' fragments repeatedly, I have convinced myself that we must favour neither the ones nor the others in any respect.[16]

I proceed to summarize in a few words how the ancient writers judged the character of the Theognidean poetry in ancient times. The age of Isocrates saw him as a severe teacher of morals; consider his book *Treatise on Men* or *On Virtue and Wickedness* (Xenophon *in Stob*. *Serm*. 88, p. 499; also Plato, *Laws* I, 630; Isocrates, *Ad Nicoclem*, ch. 12). This book had already been used to teach schoolchildren, though it may no longer have been intact and composed rather of excerpts of sentences that students were made to memorize (Isocrates *ad Nicoclem*, *init*., Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon*, p. 525, Reiske). Because of the fate of the book, I defer consideration of whether the causes of all the former judgments that have been expressed after Xenophon should be recalled. The children were still inexperienced in letters so as to be forced to work by memorizing Theognis, and to be obliged to extract from the book practically all the basic principles of his teaching. Now, it happened that Theognis' verses were very frequently diverted to vulgar and colloquial use, and they began to be mentioned in conversation, something we have learned from the writings of the Ancients, in which here and there a sentence of Theognis is mentioned. Indeed, ancient authors seem to have soon forgotten that Theognis was a real poet, not a teacher. Whence we can properly understand the words of Plutarch in *De Audiendis Poetis*, ch. 2, p. 16, who says that Theognis' sentences are speeches (λόγους) in order to avoid prose, utilize metre and cadence as a vehicle (ὄχημα). It gradually happened that the complete poems of Theognis practically vanished, since it was felt that they contained nothing useful for children save for these

selected sentences. Who, honestly, as a man would not consider undignified to return to his early childhood lessons? This is what Dio says with lucid words, I, p. 74: 'From them [Theognis, Phocylides], how could a man like us benefit?'[17]

This fate of Theognis' poems evokes the cause for why they were transmitted to us in such a miserable condition, scattered and interrupted, mixed with parodies and verses of other poets. As to when a dilettante, who pretended to be a scholar, put together Theognis' verses, which he collected from other writers and from selections of sentences, I wish to propose only this: Stobaeus had already used a book arranged in the same form as it exists even today. I wish to add to what was meticulously demonstrated by Bergk, that this could not have been undertaken before Cyril (433 BC). Cyril actually declares that Theognis wrote 'chrestomaties simple and sharp, of the type nurses would recite to girls and tutors would use with young men'. This reveals to what extent this Theognis, whom Cyril appropriated as nurture for infants, differed from the Theognis we know now, a mixture of amatory and convivial fragments, and even obscene parts, put together into a crude and disorderly concoction.

To explain briefly why I believe that we must dissociate ourselves from the opinions of the Ancients concerning Theognis – nobody, to my knowledge, carefully investigated the life and times of the poet, and nobody read Theognis to enjoy his poetry; but most people read it to draw moral teachings from him and to memorize it. Nobody, in short, made an effort to transmit those poems uncorrupted and intact into posterity. What happened to Theognis is what Horace deplored (*Sat*. I 10, 74–6).

> *Would you, like a madman,*
> *want your poems to be recited in common schools?*
> *I would not.*

6. Before our times, in which the memory of the old events are applied to the correct understanding of the remnants of Theognis, educated people could not help passing erroneous judgments about him – although not as erroneous that they should be judged for this, unless a feeling of shame would prevent it or had not an excessive consideration for antiquity impeded criticism of such a famous poet among the Greeks. Only one among them all, Goethe, declares candidly in these words, his opinion of Theognis (Goethe, *Ges. Werke*, vol. V, 54):[18]

I remember very well that we, in our youth, repeatedly struggled with Theognis and thought him a pedagogically oriented rigorous moralist from whom we sought to procure some benefit, without ever succeeding. Therefore we put him aside again and again. He came across to us as a sad <un>Greek hypochondriac [ein trauriges <un>griechischer Hypochondrist]. *For how could a city, a state, be so depraved that the good ones fared badly and the bad by all accounts fared well, and in such a measure that an honest and well-considered man would insist on denying the benevolent nature of the gods? We attributed these offensive opinions to an idiosyncratic individuality and turned our attentions somewhat reluctantly to his serene and cheerful compatriots*.

But Goethe himself greatly changed his opinion when he learned from good historians about events in Megara and the poet's plight, and expresses this with these words:

When informed by excellent classicists and by modern historical research, we can better understand his situation and are better able to know the superb man. Megara, his native city, ruled by the old-moneyed, conventional aristocrats, was, during the course of time, humiliated by one-man rule and then shattered by populist supremacy. The propertied and wellmannered, those accustomed to neat domesticity, were publicly most ignominiously assailed, and their most intimate familial relish haunted, disturbed, ruffled up, humiliated, robbed, destroyed or driven away – and along with this class, among which he counted himself, Theognis suffered all manner of trials and tribulations. His enigmatic words can be understood most completely when one learns that an exile wrote and composed those elegies. We must then admit that we can neither imagine nor understand a poem such as Dante's Inferno *if we do not bear in mind that a great mind, a decisive talent, a worthy citizen from one of the most important cities of the time who, together with his like-minded fellows was robbed of all assets and rights by the opposite party, and driven into squalor during the most bewildering times.*

Although I think this judgment should be generally favoured, I do not doubt that, in specific parts of it, Goethe could have expressed himself more accurately and clearly. Furthermore, an error is present in his words which is, in any case, based on the subject itself; because Goethe believed all of the elegies to have been composed by the poet in exile, although most of them were not written during that period. Still, it is easy to understand the cause of this mistake. Thus we reach the point at which what follows will have to explain in greater detail and specify in a clearer light.

Our argumentation will consist primarily of four issues that must be explained. I believe that:

1. Theognis did not title the poems he composed for Cyrnus 'Collection of Maxims' (γνωμολογίαν) or 'Sentences to Cyrnus'(γνώμας πρὸς Κύρνον).
2. These elegies were not composed during one specific and precise period in his life.

3. More precisely, in these elegies the poet expressed his feelings and his spirit's disposition throughout his life, and never intended to offer advice, as if in the position of a teacher.
4. Likewise, the convivial and drinking poems should not be assigned to a specific period in his life.

7. Although Welcker has already explained the first point in such a way that almost nothing is left for me to add, I feel myself astounded by Bernhardy's words: 'of the traditional title *Sentences to Cyrnus* [γνωμαι πρὸς Κύρνον]'. If somebody may wonder why am I interested in this trivial issue even more than merely mentioning it, I respond: since I try to demonstrate that Theognidean poetry was not gnomic, it is essential, in the first place, to get rid of the usual title by which the small work is commonly referred to, lest someone makes use of the very weak argument of the heading to show that his poetry was gnomic. In Suidas' brief observation on Theognis, these elegies to Cyrnus are always mentioned by three different names: 'Sentences to Cyrnus', 'Collection of Maxims', 'Exhortations' (γνωμαι πρὸς Κύρνον, γνωμολογία, παραινέσεις). It is beyond doubt that with a testimony like this it is impossible to add anything because it is in itself inconsistent, and it fluctuates so surprisingly in giving a title. Plutarch called the Theognidean poems 'Collections of Maxims' (γνωμολογίαι); Stephen of Byzantium and Aphthonius called them 'Exhortations' (παραινέσεις). It is necessary to go back to what I said about the fate of Theognis' poems at the beginning of this chapter. The extracts of sentences that I have mentioned are indicated with these titles (γνωμαι, γνωμολογίαι, παραινέσεις).

The oldest testimony on the controversial title appears in Plato's *Meno* p. 95.[19]

> Socr. *<but also> that Theognis the poet says the same things?*
> Men. *In what poems?*
> Socr. *In the elegiac*.
> And following are the verses as they are still read today.

These words make Schneidewin[20] uneasy because he notes that from the question '*in what poems?*' (ἐν ποίοις ἔπεισιν), and from the answer '*in the elegiac*' (ἐν τοις ἐλεγείοις), he could infer that Theognis also wrote another genre of poems besides elegies. This is very doubtful and should be rejected, because '*in what poems?*' must be interpreted correctly as '*in which verses?*' (cf. Aristophanes in *Clouds* 638), or as '*in which sentences?*' (cf.

Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazusae* 113; *Birds* 507). If these words had the meaning intended by Schneidewin, it would be a mistake when writing '*in what poems?*' (ἐν ποίοις ἔπεσιν), instead of '*in what poem?*' (ἐν ποίῳ or ἐν τίνι ἔπει). That is to say, the answer does not altogether fit, but this form of reply is widely used in colloquial conversation.

Since Plato, who knew the poems very well, calls them ἐλεγεία, there is no reason for us to doubt that Theognis himself inscribed his poems with this name. Welcker rightly noticed that the other titles were not peculiar book headings, but diverse terms meaning gnomic poetry.

8. We proceed to another issue, which I deem most serious as it is commonly a ground for mistakes, so I fear that, in this controversial matter, I may be wrong.

Goethe – or Wilhelm Ernst Weber, whose opinion Goethe followed – thought that these elegies to Cyrnus were composed by the poet during exile. Welcker believed Theognis wrote them when he returned from exile, old and suffering from acute impoverishment. Bernhardy noted in similar fashion '*that Theognis drafted gnomes in his old age, should not be deduced from passages like 527, but only in accordance with the tone of the convivial songs 1017 ff. and 1131 ff*'. K. O. Müller considered them to have been written after the exile, because Theognis described the hardships and struggles that he had much earlier suffered. There is great difference of opinion among scholars on this subject. Only one of them, M. Duncker in his *Greek History*, though not particularly dedicated to Theognis, comes close to the same opinion that I resolutely support and am persuaded is the plausible one; namely, that Theognis chronicled his deeds and thoughts throughout his life at every stage, and conveyed them in these elegies. This is a view I cannot maintain, unless I explain the matter in such a way as to be able to select the fragments of those elegies that were obviously written at a particular stage of the poet's life, and display them in their interconnectivity.

Composed before exile, as we have already indicated: vv. 53–8; vv. 183–90; vv. 1109–14; vv. 173–85; vv. 833–6; vv. 1103–4.

(I have selected only the fragments that bear the name of Cyrnus, lest others might doubt that the fragments are indeed taken from among those elegies dedicated to him.)

Composed in exile: vv. 209–10; vv. 1197–202.

Composed after exile: vv. 549–54; vv. 805–10; vv. 783–8.

I do not deny that the largest part of these elegies were composed during the days when Theognis, afflicted by the cruellest calamities, and despairing over the salvation of the republic, amidst painful and pressing afflictions, would seek refuge in poetry as would a ship in a port: that is, before his exile.

9. In what I have just written, I have briefly broached the proposed third point. If I understand it correctly, it then follows spontaneously, provided that the second point has been correctly explained.

Among the ancient Greeks, elegiac poems were sung in tune with the flute or the lyre; they found in them the highest connexion and affinity between poetry and the art of music. This custom had not disappeared at the time of Theognis, as his songs expressed the feelings and emotions of the spirit, which made them very suitable to singing. Thus the more impressive of Theognis' fragments have something that is peculiar to them: they come from a troubled spirit inflamed by passion. Indeed, in most of these remnants, which contain not only moral sentences, one finds expressed either the bitterest pain or a never extinguished hate against the plebeians, or a nostalgia for the homeland taken away by exile, or the worry and anxiety for the well-being of Cyrnus. We never see in them the severe and demanding teacher whose sole purpose is to impart precepts to his pupil. What certainly should not be denied is that many issues mentioned by Theognis contain in themselves doctrinal content. Furthermore, there is nothing Theognis could have feared more than that the young Cyrnus, whom he loved like a son, would stray from the teachings of aristocrats and their way of life. Theognis, therefore, advises him in the gravest terms never to abandon the path he once took. He hopes to transmit, through this young man, the ancient teachings of the aristocracy, of whom he was the keenest defender. I do not know if it may seem absurd to compare Theognis with Schiller's Marquis of Posa, who, having been wholly devoted to the study of human concerns, became passionately fond of his friend Don Carlos as the man he one day hoped would devise plans to implement his counsel. Therefore, he did not hesitate to devote his life to those plans and his friend.

For my part when I read Theognis, nowhere do I find gnomic poetry, though I am ready to grant that anyone who approaches Theognis without being educated in the knowledge of history will think he has found something similar to the proverbs of Solomon, with which Julian [the Apostate] actually did compare the *Theognidea*. It is not therefore

superfluous to transcribe the words of Goethe, which correspond most perfectly to what I have said:

> *We are used to interpreting the statements of a poet – regardless of their nature – in a general fashion, and to adapt them to our circumstances as it justly befits. Thereby many passages take on an entirely different meaning than in the context from which they were taken. A proverb of Terence, in the mouth of an elder or a slave, means something different on the page of a family album.*

I entirely disagree with Plutarch's judgment, therefore, recently commended by Teuffel[21] with these words: '*Plutarch, however, has already admitted correctly the fundamentally prosaic character of his poetry*'. On the contrary, if something in the remnants of his poetry sounds sententious – and not a few of them are likely to be of a sententious nature – I regret the fact that such verses, separated from their genuine context and order, can no longer be identified as to when and in which cases they were composed by Theognis.

10. There still remains one last though no less important question concerning convivial and drinking poems. What we can most easily demonstrate is that these poems were written at different times, if we discount old age: nature seems to exclude from jocular cheerfulness and the joys of love.

> Composed as an adolescent: vv. 1119–22; vv. 773–82; vv. 756—69; vv. 1153–4.
> Composed as a young adult: vv. 1017–22; vv. 1129–32.
> Composed in Sparta by the exiled Theognis: vv. 1087–90; vv. 879–84.

The name Cyrnus is nowhere to be found in the convivial poems, though it appears very frequently in all other elegies. From this, I can deduce what Welcker conceded: that those poems '*had no place in a collection of sentences. It was entirely inconvenient for a poet to dedicate drinking and amatory poems to an adolescent to whom he wanted to teach the best precepts*'. But Welcker asserts that these verses were not edited independently, since almost all Antiquity is silent about them, and Theognis was clearly distinguished by Dio [Chrysostomus], that most expert writer, from the poets of amatory and convivial poems. Dio states that Alexander, when asked by his father why among all poets he only read Homer, replied that not all poetry was fit for a king: '*For, compared to the other poems, I, at least, think that among these some are convivial and others, amatory ... In like manner some might be called popular, those that help the populace and*

private individuals with advice and exhortations, as I think are those of Phocilides and Theognis.'[22]

But this judgment should also be applied to the excerpts known from the whole *Theognidea*, so that from these words no conclusion could be drawn on the authenticity of convivial poems. Neither is all of Antiquity silent about these poems, since Athenaeus, who was a most diligent researcher on ancient issues, ascribed vv. 917–22 and vv. 1057–60 to Theognis, using the words: '*and Theognis also talks about a pleasant life, so that he refers to himself in them*'.[23] This means that the farrago of all remnants had not yet been given the current form, because if Athenaeus had had these same fragments we now possess, many of which prove more reliably that Theognis was not untoward to pleasures, he would have certainly used them. I must confess that I lack the most irrefutable arguments to prove that these convivial poems were in fact authored by Theognis; but there is no reason to question them at all or to reject the most beautiful part of the fragments, although it would be an exceedingly admirable thing for the happiest poems of an uncertain author to be ascribed to Theognis, who was regarded as a severe teacher of morals. I am very glad, therefore, that Bernhardy has also expressed the almost identical opinion in II 457: '*Furthermore, the convivial part has a quality of presentation and such vivacity, that only an adolescent Theognis could have written them*.' These words can mean nothing other than that Bernhardy also attributed the authorship of these poems to Theognis. To be sure, Welcker is right in thinking that the last part of the amatory argument of the *Theognidea*, attached to the remaining fragments from a single codex, was spurious, because these poems of unknown author were attributed to Theognis on the basis of Suidas' words, '*Sentences to Cyrnus, the lover of Theognis*', a view with which I strongly disagree (cf. Welcker, cii, Bernhardy, II 458, K. O. Müller).[24]

11. I have already reasoned in general about the structure of Theognidean poetry; I will add a few things about the artistic skills that he used, in order to demonstrate that Theognis was not so uninteresting, so lacking in vigour, so prone to prose as the Ancients, especially Plutarch, would claim.

First, I shall gather images and similes taken from Theognis.

v. 114 a bad port (a plebeian)
v. 105 to sow on the sea – to do good to a bad man (τὸν κακὸν ευ ποιειν)
vv. 657–82 cf. v. 855 a ship in danger (the republic) – this simile is adorned in the most beautiful

way in individual scenarios.
v. 83 in just one ship (one could easily put together all good men in one ship)
v. 970 a ship dodging another ship (a false and treacherous friend must be kept estranged)
vv. 457–60 ship, helm, anchor, port (a woman's fidelity)
v. 575 the helmsman avoids a projecting rock (myself and my enemies) Very frequently one will rightly marvel at the poet's use of nautical themes in his similes; this can be explained by the flourishing maritime trade and sailing of the Megarians.
v. 56 deer (former inhabitants)
v. 949 deer and lion (Theognis himself, after his return)
vv. 293–94 a lion does not always eat meat (nobles afflicted by scarcity)
vv. 1057–60 donkey and mule (two runners in the stadium)
v. 847 the beast, on which the spurs and the yoke should be imposed (the plebeians)
v. 257 the mare speaks (a female acquaintance of noble origin)
v. 983 horses across fields full of wheat (youth flees so quickly)
v. 811 a bird (a young female acquaintance)
v. 1097 winged creature flying out of a lake (Cyrnus running away from a plebeian)
v. 939 a nightingale (singing in a clear voice)
v. 347 a dog is saved from the stream (Theognis himself from the perils)
v. 602 snake on one's chest (a false friend)
v. 537 roses and hyacinths do not grow from onions (a noble never comes from a commoner)
– Megarian onion growers were famous; Scholiast, Aristophanes, *Peace* 245; Pliny XIX 5, 30; XX 9, 40
– In Nisaean fields many roses grow; Nicander in Athenaeo XV 491
v. 215 an octopus (a false friend)
v. 568 stone and ground (a man in the grave)
v. 175 a monster that should be thrown into the sea (misery)

These are presented as characters by the poet:

hope v. 1135
trust v. 1137
richness v. 523, v. 1117
moderation v. 1138
the city (is pregnant) <v. 39, v. 1081>
poverty v. 351
wine v. 873
the land v. 9
the sea v. 10

Theognis allows them to speak:

a plebeian
Aithon (v.1209)
a beloved girl (v. 579)
a mare (v. 257)

The poet mentions the following mythical figures:

Odysseus v. 1123
Rhadamanthys v. 701
Alcatheos (a civic hero) v. 773
Sisyphus v. 702
Nestor v. 714
Harpies v. 715
Centaurs v. 541
Boreas v. 716
Castor and Polydeuces <v. 1087>

12. After having represented some forms through a few examples, we must now proceed to explain in more detail Theognis' different kinds of poetry. We shall start with a discussion about the convivial poems.

Just as in Sparta, also among the nobles of Megara *syssitia* seemed to have been established in ancient times, and it seems that similar laws were observed in them[25] (vv. 563–6, vv. 309–12; cf. Welcker, *Prolegomena*, and Grote, *History of Greece*). Theognidean elegiac poetry was somehow born within these aristocratic circles, to the point that from the remnants of the poetry we may form in our minds an image of such banquets. After guests are satiated with food (vv. 997–1002), they pour wine into their cups, offer a libation to the gods, and direct their prayers and songs especially to Apollo (vv. 943–4). This is followed by that part of the feast called *Komos*, wholly devoted to musical performance and cheerful banter. Some table companions made it a practice to sing elegiac poems to the rhythm of the flute, among which almost all of Theognidean elegies should be placed. It seems that Theognis, so to speak, selected the subjects of such poems – which could be classified in various and diverse classes – from common events of life and especially from banquet scenes, as these were supposedly the best way they could stimulate the sensations and feelings of guests. And indeed, Theognis banters, either gently or with refinement, with his friends, as when he invites them to banquets and drinking parties (vv. 1047–8, vv. 997–1002, vv. 879–84), or when he sings hymns to the gods or says prayers:

vv. 1–4	to Apollo
vv. 5–10	to Apollo again
vv. 15–18	to the Muses and Graces
vv. 11–14	to Diana
vv. 337–40, vv. 341–50	to Jupiter
vv. 757–68	to Jupiter and Apollo
vv. 773	to Apollo
v. 1087	to Castor and Pollux

The most beautiful of these is the second poem to Apollo, the inclusion of which will be useful:

vv. 5–10 *Lord Phoebus, when Leto the goddess lady,*
clutching with her slender hands a flexible palm, bore you,
the most beautiful of immortals, by the circular lake,
all of Delos was filled with an infinite ambrosial fragrance
and the earth smiled in prodigious brightness,
and the rough sea rejoiced in a wave of sparkling salt.

At one time he recommends charmingly the use of wine, as in v. 929; or commends the worthy enjoyment of youth (v. 877, vv. 983–8), or he is grieved most bitterly about his lost youth (vv. 1017– 22, vv. 1129–32). What I said about the connection and affinity of music with poetry seems to be perfectly attributable to Theognis in a peculiar way, to the point that I know of no ancient poet to have written more subtly on the influence of music. For this reason, not a small portion of convivial poems (intended to praise music) combined sweetness and charm with the vigour and enthusiasm of the sentences, as when Theognis describes the Orcus and is afflicted because he will probably miss in it the music (vv. 973–8, vv. 531–2, vv. 533–4, v. 944).

Regarding the contests that often occur among table companions, we must refer to vv. 406–7, vv. 533–4, v. 944.

This genre of table songs and riddles was very common at banquets, which is also documented in Theognis in the following verses:

vv. 255–6 *The most beautiful is most just, and best is health;*
and the most pleasant thing is to obtain what you love.

And vv. 1229–30, preserved by Athenaeus:

For precisely now a marine corpse has summoned me home; though dead, it speaks through a living mouth.

Scholars have also discovered an enigma hidden in other verses, as in v. 1209, vv. 949–54, although there is no reason why they may not be explained in a simple way.

Apart from these elegies, whose topics comprise the common character of banquets, Theognis also composed elegies related to specific circumstances and events whose most outstanding fragments deal with amatory themes. For example, Theognis fell in love with a girl whose parents favoured a plebeian rather than him; it seems that her parents belonged to those nobles whose

spirit, being unworthy of their lineage and only greedy for riches, were sharply rebuked by Theognis. Nonetheless, the girl preferred the noble [Theognis] who, although poor, would (it seems to me) meet with her when she went to draw water from the fountain. So then:

vv. 265–6 *There, embracing the girl with my arms, I kissed*
her neck, and a soft whisper came out from her lips.

In this amatory elegy Theognis most often makes the girl speak:

vv. 257–60 *I am a beautiful and noble mare, but the evilest of men*
rides me
and this is most annoying to me;
and very often I've wished to break the bit
and flee, after expelling my bad rider.
…
vv. 579–80 *I loathe the bad man, but I wrap myself in a veil as I walk by,*
because I have the whimsical spirit of a little bird.
…
vv. 861–4 *All my friends abandon me and don't want to offer me anything*
in the presence of men. But I, spontaneously,
at dusk, run away and come back again at dawn,
at the crowing of roosters waking up.

I ignore whether Theognis married the same young woman; he indeed commends agreed marriage with a noble woman. Perhaps her name was Argyris.

vv. 1225–6 *Nothing is sweeter, Cyrnus, than a good wife.*
I testify, and you bear witness of my truthfulness.
vv.1211–16 *Don't revile my dear parents so blatantly by making silly jokes,*
Argyris; because it hangs on you the day of slavery;
although many evils overwhelm us, woman, since we have escaped
from our land; but annoying slavery isn't upon us
nor are we being sold: at least we have a beautiful city,
lying on the Lethaean plain.

Besides this one, Theognis wrote an elegy to Simonides before his exile, depressed by the despotism of the plebeians, which we have already mentioned (vv. 667–82), at a time when he was permitted to signify the situation of the republic in a concealed manner and by means of circumlocutions.

vv. 815–16 *An ox trampling on my tongue with its powerful hoof, Cyrnus,*
prevents my beguiling with my poetry, although I am well versed on it.

The exiled Theognis wrote to Clearistos who, suffering from deprivation, came to him and kindly received him (vv. 511–22). He invokes a good omen for another exile who was about to begin a sea journey (vv. 691–2).

Theognis advises Damocles to endure poverty in moderation (vv. 923–30). It seems that the exiled aristocrats, completely accustomed to comfort and a luxurious life, tolerated the scarcity of resources and misfortunes of exile with greater difficulty.

vv. 1085–6 *But you, Demonax, bear many things grievously. For you don't know how to do with what may displease you.*

Verses 597–8, vv. 599–602 attack treacherous friends, whose deceitful nature Theognis is likely to have experienced while in exile.

After exile, as we have said, Theognis deplored, in an elegy of which four verses still remain (vv. 891–4), the defeat of the nobles of Cerinthus at the hands of plebeians.

After the return of the nobles, a man who at one time belonged to the popular party, strove captiously to gain the favour of Theognis: Theognis strongly rejected him (vv. 453–6).

What vv. 1209–10 mean has not yet been explained by any interpreter.

13. Finally, regarding the elegies dedicated to Cyrnus, which we will now proceed to address, there is no doubt that the poet, as he wrote each of them, did not yet have in mind that some time later they would be published together and placed in order. This is indeed what was done; the fact is that there remain verses (vv. 19 ff.) where Theognis declares his imprinting of a kind of seal on his poems so that they can easily be separated from spurious ones. Additionally, we must hypothesize from the words of Xenophon quoted by Stobaeus that these verses were the beginning of the elegies, and so they were placed as the title for the whole book. I am inclined to believe that these verses were composed by the old Theognis and added to the poems when he decided to publish them, specifically because: (1) he calls himself a 'wise man', something only an old man could say without arrogance; (2) there is no doubt that an adolescent would in no way have written the following: 'and celebrated among all people, in no way (οὔτω) could I please all the citizens'. It is unlikely that, before his exile, Theognis could already have won the reputation of poetical excellence throughout Greece. In addition, that 'in no way' (οὔτω) means that he had not yet attracted the

favour of the optimates and the members of the popular party, which is something he sought as an old man after his exile.

Before I consider the topics dealt with in these elegies, a few observations remain regarding the relationship between Cyrnus and Theognis. Welcker suggests that the address 'Cyrnus' refers only to the form of the book, since Theognis would use frequently Κύρνε, not as a proper name but as an old nominal, with which he would create a fictional character.[26] And, assuredly, Welcker further suggests that this practice was also common among lyric poets, so that by addressing a friend gently they would make a representation of something real rather than imagined, which would provoke a most especial affection, or rather would suggest an attitude of how the poets wished their thoughts to be received, as one who opens one's heart deeply, not to someone completely unknown but only to friends. Welcker comments that, to a great extent, this practice is congruent with gnomic poetry. Soothed indeed by the figurative meaning of paternal warmth, the severity of precepts would insinuate themselves more easily in the minds of young people.

I disagree completely with Welcker's opinion, since it embodies the least appropriate semblance that we have presented of Theognis. Theognis was not a teacher of precepts: he did not create a character that would address his words gently in order for his precepts to be insinuated more easily in the minds of adolescents; by no means should Theognis be included among gnomic poets, as we have already demonstrated. On the contrary, there are many indications of that inner disposition of character I have already mentioned. Since Theognis seems on occasion to profess the affection of a father, or now of a brother, or now of a friend towards Cyrnus, this must be understood as a consequence of the different periods in the lives of each. While one played the part of the counselling father and the other of the adolescent, as adults they increasingly forgot their age difference, and bonded together as friends as though they could gradually bridge the difference in years between them. Cyrnus, therefore, as most recent editors except Welcker agree, was the son of Polypaides (Πολυπαΐδης); Welcker, in contrast, states instead that the given and the patronymic names are found together both in invocations to the gods and exhortations to men, as Glaukos son of Leptines and Charilaos son of Erasmos in Archilochos, Glaukos son of Epikydes in the oracle in Herodotus (VI, 86), and elsewhere. This may, indeed, happen, but it is not necessary, as may be seen in many passages in Homer: Tydides son of Tydeos (*Odyssey* V 18, 134, 303) and very often

Ligystiade in Solon (Diogenes Laertius, 1, 66). Schneidewin was the first to demonstrate that Polypaides was the patronymic of Cyrnus (*Delectus poesis Graecorum*, Prolegomena to Theognis). Perhaps we should not omit that Theognis, with a play on words, admonishes Cyrnus that he should adopt the disposition of an octopus; in these words is contained the meaning of the names Polypaos or polypos (Πολιπάου or Πολύπου).

The verses below show that Cyrnus attended the aristocratic banquets and was highly esteemed and beloved in them:

vv. 655–6 *We grieve with you all, Cyrnus, terribly, in your condition.*

The adolescent Cyrnus seems to have hesitated for some time whether he would associate with Theognis, so that the latter did not know what he should do and was bewildered as to why Cyrnus did not declare his feelings sincerely.

vv. 87–90 *Do not show me affection in words but indulge your mind and the rest of your heart*
if you love me, and possess a trusty understanding,
but love me if you foster a pure mind, or desisting,
hate me openly raising your contention.
…
v. 656 *but an affliction that is alien to you is short-lived*.
…
vv. 253–4 *I do not find from you any respect yet,*
but you trick me with your words as I were a little child.

When disturbances bore down on the republic, Theognis repeatedly advised Cyrnus to follow a middle course between the opposing parties (vv. 331–2; vv. 219–20), and not to suffer so intensely the inequities of the situation. But Theognis himself was, at the time, far from being moderate and self-restrained in public affairs; each day, incited by the most violent anger and stirred by passion, he sent elegies to Cyrnus, whom he wanted to quiet down, and in those elegies he disclosed and portrayed with appropriate colours an inextinguishable hatred toward plebeians, his most unfriendly feelings against the degenerate nobles, and his contempt for disloyal friends.

On marriages between aristocrats and common people

vv. 183–90, 537–8, 193–6

On the upheaval of public affairs

vv. 53–8, vv. 279–82, vv. 647–8, vv. 1135–50

On the unbridled license of the plebeians

vv. 39–42, vv. 43–52, vv. 663–4, vv. 833–6

On the pernicious power of wealth

vv. 53–60, vv. 699–718, vv. 1109–14, vv. 719–28

One may be surprised by the fact that Theognis attacked his adversaries so bitterly, often so unfairly; and yet, as we have shown, he would try to win over the favour of the common people, and preserve his possessions and his life by serving the interests of the people. This is what W. Teuffel so perceptively noticed (Pauly, Sv. Theognis):

> *As proof that – by dreary experience – his mood against the people is a bitter one, he postulates his theory all the more radically, the more he is forced to make compromises with reality. So much so that, in the face of life's humiliations, he intends to save the pride of his conscience, and by expressing the latter in writing, he will exact his revenge for the former.*

Theognis sank, in those days, into extreme poverty, which he lamented in many elegies calling it a most miserable and serious burden on him:

vv. 267–79 *Poverty, in fact, certainly does not visit either the*
agora or the courts,
for everywhere it is at a disadvantage
and it is ridiculed everywhere
and everywhere it is equally hated, wherever it may be.

For this reason it is better for the poor to die (vv.181–2), or surely to escape by sea to get rid of scarcity (vv. 173–80). Theognis laments above all the fact that extreme poverty and necessity could turn a man away from the right path and teach him indecent crimes; I do not know whether in the following verses he implies, in a concealed manner, how much he regrets having acted, sometimes in spite of himself, as a supporter of the popular party:

vv. 649–52 *Ah, miserable poverty, why dishonour our body and mind*
now that you lie on my shoulders?
and against my will many base things you teach me by force,
although I know what is noble and honourable among men.

If you consider carefully the topics of those elegies he composed while in exile, in most of them there is a certain disdain and contempt for human

affairs

vv. 425–8 *The best of all still is for those who inhabit the earth*
not having been born
nor look upon the beams of a piercing sun.
But to whom is born, to pass the gates of Hades as quickly as possible,
and heaped up with much earth, to lie dead.
…

vv. 695–6 *I cannot, my heart, provide all your ornaments.*
Be patient: you are not the only one loving beautiful things.

v. 441, vv. 555–6, vv. 1117–18, vv. 1229–36

He himself admits that, in exile, he suffered much from nostalgia for the homeland (v. 787).

But any delight came to my heart from them.
Thus, anything was dearer than the homeland.

Perhaps he had left his wife in his homeland, who seems to have been Argyris, who is already mentioned in vv. 1123–8.

Do not remind me of my evils: indeed, I have suffered as Odysseus did,
who emerged from the great mansions of Hades,
who, also as a prudent man, destroyed without mercy
the suitors of Penelope, the lawful wife,
who long awaited staying beside the beloved son,
and until he arrived at the dreaded and furthest nooks of his land.

It is also most noteworthy, in this context, to take note of the following verses by Theognis:

vv. 1197–201 *The cry of the bird that sings, Polypaides, I heard sharp,*
it has come for men as messenger for the station
of plow; and made my black heart throb,
since my fields, covered by flowers, others possess,
nor the mules pull from the curved yoke of my plow.

As he reflects upon these circumstances, he is drawn so strongly by a vehement anger and hatred against plebeians, that he urges Jupiter to avenge him.

vv. 343–4 *Or I die if I do not find any rest of my dire concerns,*
and I may render sorrows in return for sorrows.

v. 349 *May I drink their black blood!*

vv. 361–2 *Look, you Cyrnus, when a man has suffered a great loss, his heart*
shrinks, and when he gets revenge, then it strengthens.

These verses were seemingly composed before the battle in which the aristocrats defeated the people:

vv. 819–20 *We are here precisely in the presence of an evil desired by many,*
Cyrnus, let's fate find both together at death

After this battle (in which the aristocrats overcame the people), vv. 949–54, I am intrigued as to why Welcker should have judged that an indecent enigma was hidden here.

A fragment remains, which was probably composed after exile: Theognis advises Cyrnus, who holds the position of *theoros*, to observe diligently what the gods command.[27]

But if someone thinks that I appear excessively concerned about these arguments and that I devote too much time in considering them, may the following suffice as my excuse. The fact is that I had in mind to refute what Bergk recently wrote about the content of the *Theognidea*. It seems to me that he errs greatly when he asserts that nothing remains of the whole of Theognis, except an interrupted series of countless sentential extracts.[28] Besides this, I think I have also demonstrated that there are a few traces in this farrago of fragments, which can lead us without difficulty to identify certain events and facts, certain circumstances of his life. I myself willingly concede, however, that I am in no way satisfied at my selection and disposition of such fragments, because it has very often occurred that various fragments each with different content had to be noted and described on the same page.

III. Theognis' opinions about gods, customs and public issues are discussed

14. As enough has already been said about the life and writings of Theognis, the third proposed point is still pending, namely to try and explain Theognis' perception of divine and human affairs. Since not many scholars have expressed their opinions on this particular issue, it may be useful before we address this matter to read Bernhardy's words, which represent briefly the usual opinion of scholars (II 457):

> *The entire corpus of elegies is based on the political and ethical beliefs of the Dorians, namely a caste-based moral doctrine* [Tugendlehre] *which ties noble birth with every spiritual and cultural excellence, with the ownership of property and with worldly wisdom. The poet, characterized by a*

deep revulsion towards the ruling rabble [Pöbel]*, vouched for the inalienable rights of good men in a kernel of sound sentences and experiences.*

Welcker has already warned us that, when listening to Theognis, we should not forget that a Dorian and noble citizen is speaking to us. Grote, the only one who opposed this view (*History of Greece* III, chapter 9), admits that he cannot find or recognize the Dorian strength and character in the Theognidian poems. Although he does not fully argue this point, his judgement is most worthy of consideration.

The fact is that Theognis, born into an ancient and illustrious family, embraced the cause of the nobility with such interest and concern that he devoted all his thoughts and hopes to its restoration and expansion. But he found himself in a situation in which the real strength of Dorian nobility had been already completely undermined from within; and its precepts, shall I say, were trampled down during the process of total upheaval. Hence it happened that Theognis himself began to question some of those precepts, and set out to envision a new conviction. And precisely what path Theognis embarked upon, so that he appeared as an old man to express more freely his views about the republic and about divine and human affairs, we can now also discern from many signs.

Indeed, Theognidean poetry has the peculiarity that opinions about gods and customs are closely linked to Theognis' views on public affairs; therefore, we are unable to deal with these issues separately. The cause of this situation lies in the unique manner of Megarian civic organization, which, because of its division and distribution into defined classes, or castes as they called them, necessarily generated and fostered divergent judgements about human and divine matters in the different classes. When the most bitter struggle between these classes [*certamen acerrimum inter has classes*] broke out and Theognis manifested himself as the most implacable champion of the nobility, his poems also separated the people in such a way that he named one party τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, that is to say, the aristocrats [*optumates*], the good men, who were in charge of the practice of cult and manifested feelings of piety and religiosity towards the gods, and of justice and virtue towards men. He named the other party τοὺς κακοὺς or τοὺς δειλοὺς, that is to say, the bad and the lowly, embodying all evil, impiety and moral depravity. It is clear, then, why, in Theognis' thought, opinions on human and divine matters were closely related.

We must now examine what gave Theognis the right to think in this way about the nobility and plebeians, and how this opinion should be restated.

15. Regarding the nobles, we may understand how in Theognis' times they exercised control and imposed their superiority over the plebeians, if we understand that their dignity and authority [*dignitas et auctoritas*] was founded precisely on five qualifying considerations. First, they held in the highest esteem the antiquity of lineage and illustrious origin, especially when this origin could be traced back to heroes and to the gods themselves as founders [*auctores*]. In contrast, the plebeian man who sprang from a useless and pernicious lineage, was cloaked in obscurity and his name was not celebrated beyond his lifespan. This is something Theognis expresses bitterly in a couplet:

vv. 797–8 *Some vehemently blame the good men, others praise them,*
but there is no memory of the bad men at all.

vv. 535–8 *Never has a slavish head grown upright*
but it is always distorted, the neck slanted.
For neither wild squills bear roses or hyacinths,
nor a woman slave bears a free child.

Second, the nobles, because they had mastered the use of weapons and the knowledge of war, especially because since antiquity they had bestowed on themselves the exclusive right to govern the republic and admit no one from the people to administer it, they were always convinced that their involvement in public affairs was always successful and effective.

v. 43 *The good men, Cyrnus, have never destroyed a city –*

He continues:

v. 44 *but when bad men rejoice in committing outrages*
they also destroy the people

v. 51 *From this – <arise> seditions and the slaughter of men.*

Besides, only the nobles possessed knowledge of law and could interpret legislation; which determined Theognis to think that plebeians 'use justice in favour of those who act unjustly' (v. 45):

vv. 279–80 *It is natural for the bad man to consider justice wicked,*
as he has no respect whatsoever for an eventual divine punishment.

With these last words, the poet expresses that plebeians, not constrained by any religion, are not afraid of the gods; and this is the third consideration upon which aristocrats believed their authority was based. The administration of all sacred rites was in their hands. This led aristocrats to assume that the gods were propitious to them, while wrathful towards the plebeians.

We should recall at this point an opinion common in Theognis' times or, more precisely, one that was transmitted from the most ancient times of the Greeks to the epoch of Theognis, reveals how much dignity the nobles attributed to themselves. They believed that the gods entered into a formal agreement with men, by which it was determined that if the gods received from men honours and ritual sacrifices, they would be obliged to grant them goods and benefits. Pindar's opinion is not different (*Pythian* 2, 73): *if someone walks along the right and true path, he is destined to receive benefits from the gods*. But I fear to affirm that, already, this earlier epoch would judge as naively as Pindar did what we consider happiness (εὐδαιμονίᾳ) and misfortune (εχθροδαιμονίᾳ). On the contrary, in Sophocles' times, if we were to allow King Oedipus to judge on this matter, it seemed that the gods chose at their will whom they would love and grant their goods, regardless of personal characteristics; not even their piety would let them embrace someone they had not chosen: this belief was imprinted on the minds of all and did not seem to be easily questioned. But (to return to the point from which we have strayed somewhat) the extent to which that early period was familiar with these opinions may be conjectured from many Theognidean poems. They presume as obvious that virtue, as well as wealth and honour, cannot be understood unless they are put together and entwined by the closest links.

vv. 653–4	*May I be happy and dear to the gods immortal,* *Cyrnus: I do not desire any other form of virtue.*
vv. 525–6	*For it is fair that the good possess wealth,* *while poverty is appropriate for the bad man.*
vv. 171–2	*Pray to the gods, the gods of power, certainly* *nothing happens to men without the intercession of gods,* *neither good nor bad*
vv. 197–8	*And the possessions that come from Zeus, obtained in* *justice and in purity,* *remain constant.*

Theognis thinks that from the indigence of the plebeian man results a miserable state of helplessness (ἀμηχανίαν) which drags him into a wicked disposition.

vv. 384–92 *... they reap poverty,*
the mother of helplessness, ...
which also leads the heart of man astray to err
impairing, disguised as cruel need, their deep feelings;
...
then yielding to indigence, that teaches so much evil,
including lies and deceit, and fatal discord,
...
because need also begets painful helplessness.

Of how much importance riches and a refined and splendorous way of life [*divitiae victusque cultus et splendor*] are to attain a dignified status is something that can also often be observed in our times.

In addition to this, in amongst what we have called Greek nobility, wealth was fused with cultural instruction and the study of the liberal arts, while the plebeians, ignorant and deprived of all instruction, were subject to a most miserable condition of life:

vv. 54–6 *Those men who before did not know either justice or laws,*
but wore goatskins on their sides,
and spread outside this city like deer.

Yet, there was among the nobles the richest abundance of precepts and instructions for a life of moral rectitude, in accordance with the basic principles of the aristocracy and transmitted from ancestors to their children and descendants, so that, as Theognis declared, he did not hand over to Cyrnus anything but:

vv. 27–8 *… Such things as I myself,*
Cyrnus, learned from good men while still a child.

In contrast, the plebeian man, who has already inherited from his parents a defective nature and disposition, is not only completely unable to restore it and improve it; but in his dealings and familiarity with bad men, as an adult, he becomes corrupt by the day.

vv. 305–7 *The bad people were not completely bad from childhood*
but after befriending other bad men
they have also learned wrongdoing, abusive language and excess.

vv. 437–8 *… only by teaching,*
you will never turn a bad man into a good man.
(cf. Plato, *Meno* 95c–96a)

Because the honourable status of the nobles, by which they kept the people subjugated and obedient, depended on the distinction of an ancient lineage, on the knowledge and management of war and state functions, on the administration of the sacred rites, on the splendour of their wealth and refinement and, finally, on their formation in the liberal arts, is it a wonder that Theognis, who thought that between the nobles and the people there was such great a distance, would say that an aristocrat ought to distance himself from any dealings with the plebeians? I fear, judging from vv. 343 and 347, that they refer to plebeians, inasmuch as nobles should be prohibited from associating with them as partners, and not even share a journey for commercial purposes. Even more, Theognis also considers that there is nothing more false and useless than to benefit a plebeian, since he will never return the favour.

vv. 105–8 *Doing good to the* δειλοὺς*, is a most useless kindness;*
it is like sowing the white furrows of the sea.
Because neither sowing the sea will yield a rich harvest:
nor by doing good to the κακοὺς *would you receive any good in return.*

If, on the other hand, circumstances require that a noble man should associate with plebeians, he should indeed show himself most amicable in his words and in his countenance, but in fact he should be possessed by an inextinguishable hatred [*odio inexstincto*] against them. *Confer* Teuffel:

> *One's disposition towards fellow-citizens must be one of absolute mistrust and deep inner contempt; and one ought to adopt the most glib and cordial countenance only to display one's intellectual superiority. The poet had the naiveté to present this unworthy teaching with the greatest shamelessness and recommended it as smartness, e.g. vv. 283, 213, 313, 363–5.*

We thus encounter that haughty conviction of the Dorian nobility [*illam superbam Doriensis nobilitatis persuasionem*]; and nobody can deny that Theognis shared their judgement, although it is doubtful that he persisted in it at that time when, due to civil strife and the alteration of all things, the foundations of this conviction, which was based on the already mentioned *eudaimonia*, were profoundly shaken.

16. If we seek to know which circumstances caused the progressively weakened aristocratic authority to lapse day by day, the first and most

serious cause must be traced back to the time when many plebeians, especially in coastal cities, began to increase their wealth through large-scale and opulent trade. They quickly matched the nobles in their riches, outdid them in purchases and luxury, because they themselves no longer shunned any kind of finer elegance, but dedicated their effort to develop their moral character and spiritual qualities, especially since often, after their return from long journeys, they were enriched by knowledge. Besides, the nobles did not preserve the integrity of ancient customs, but often gave themselves over to luxury and pleasure, gradually gave up military duty [*armorum usu*], and did not administer their patrimony moderately. Even worse, they piled up debts to the point that some of them ended up in shameful poverty. Whence it happened that the nobles no longer utterly distanced themselves from the people, but sought wealth by intermarrying [*conjugiis mutuis initis*], while plebeians could in this way aspire to and achieve dignity. 'Wealth has mixed up race', says Theognis (v. 190).

And indeed, all that we said about the gradual degradation of the aristocracy [*paulatim corrupta nobilitate*] and the flourishing of the people, occurred among the Megarians after the dictatorship of Theagenes. Certainly, nothing caused more damage to the nobles than the dictatorship of Theagenes who, having been born to an illustrious family, for some time commanded the popular party and then achieved his preeminence with the support of the people. As stated in Aristotle's *Politics* 5, 3, 1: 'Oligarchies fall when the leader of the people happens to emerge from within them'.

Theognis lived during this period, which we have described briefly, and raised from childhood in the precepts of the nobility, which, as an adult, he found were despised everywhere. Hence, it happened that he could not help but doubt the justice of the gods, something he honestly confessed:

vv. 373–80 *Dear Zeus, you amaze me: you certainly rule over all things,*
because honour and supreme power are yours,
...
How then, son of Cronos, does your mind dare to hold
the guilty and the just in the same esteem?
…

vv. 743–6 *and this, king of the immortals, how can it be fair*
that a man who is far from injustice,
committing no transgression or reproachable swearing
is just not treated with justice?

But Theognis felt especially aggrieved that, while plebeians die endowed with immense fortunes, there would be nobody to punish them, unless perhaps the children or their descendants would pay a price for their parents' crimes. Because of this, he proposed to Zeus that he show the path that he would take in order to punish bad men:

vv. 731–42 *Father Zeus, may the gods find it pleasing that the wicked delight in their insolence an*
may this be dear to their own heart,
but that any arrogant man who would purposefully do dire deeds,
by no means respectful of the gods, would pay
for his wrongdoings in person, and the wickedness of the father
should not later become his children's bane.
...
May this be pleasing to the blessed gods;
but now the guilty one escapes, another thereafter bears the guilt.

But if men were to doubt divine justice, Theognis feared that they might not know the path and the means by which anyone could hope to receive the grace of the gods.

vv. 381–2 *And is there not something decided by divinity for mortals,*
or a path someone could follow to please the gods?

Hence it happens that men become, day by day, more corrupt and will turn away from the gods.

For this reason, there are not a few verses in which Theognis laments that there is not a single man altogether free of criminality.

v. 799 *None of the men on earth is born free of guilt.*

vv. 615–16 *Of the men the sun looks down upon*
there is no man entirely good and moderate.

vv. 1185–6 *The rays of the sun that shine on us, Cyrnus,*
view no man who does not deserve reproach.

(vv. 1183–4)

As an additional factor the nobles, afflicted by a most serious destitution, were forced to deviate from the path of righteousness, since the burden of poverty shifted from plebeians to aristocrats. This was to such an extent unusual and unheard of that they did their best to free themselves from it.

vv. 649–52 *Ah, wretched poverty ...*
...
against my desire you teach me perforce much that is shameful.

vv. 179–80 *For it is necessary to search upon the earth as well as on the*
wide surface of the sea to find rescue, Cyrnus, from painful poverty.

Finally, deprived of his property and homeland, Theognis seemed at first desperate about his own well-being and yearned for death.

vv. 181–2 *Being dead, dear Cyrnus, is better for a poor man*
than living distressed by a painful poverty.
cf. vv. 425–9.

But afterwards, Theognis submitted more and more to his time and endured all evil with more restraint; in fact, he lowered himself so much as to even say:

vv. 444–6 *The gifts of the gods*
are coming to mortals in various ways, but it is fated
that we must accept such gifts of the immortals, as it is they who give them.

vv. 1031–6 *Do not boast about things that cannot be done increasing*
your suffering;
do not be a disgust to friends,
nor a joy to your enemies. The mortal man cannot easily escape
the gifts of the gods set by fate,
either sinking into the depths of a rough sea
or when the misty Tartarus retains you.

17. A single point remains, which may be proven more through conjecture than argument. For indeed, it is quite possible that, once Theognis returned to his motherland, almost nearing the end of his life, he not only exercised more moderation in public affairs, but also distanced himself from some of his previous convictions about gods and men, and expressed himself a bit more liberally [*paulo liberius*] above all concerning the dignity of plebeian men. He now exhorts Cyrnus not to reproach anyone for the opprobrium of poverty.

vv. 155–8 *Therefore, even if it causes you displeasure, never reproach a man*
on account of his poverty, nor throw on him his wretched poverty.
For truly Zeus does tilt the scales either to one side or another,
at one time to be rich, and at another to have nothing.

Theognis seems to have found relief in believing that both good and bad are only allotted to mortals by the gods, and that this is absolutely based on their arbitrary will.

vv. 133–42 *Nobody, Cyrnus, is himself responsible for his own ruin or benefit,*
but the gods are the givers of both:
neither does any man undertake a task knowing in his heart whether the final outcome wil
be good or bad.
…
But we, men, still believe in vain things, though we know nothing;
but the gods design everything according to their own intent.

I now return to what Grote wrote, which was my starting point. I believe Theognis has taught me one thing. Since his life coincided with the transmutation of all things and opinions, it could not be possible for him to retain the same convictions with which he seemed to have been raised as a child. Hence, it is plain what Grote meant: that we should really agree that the Dorian vigour and its genuine nature was already in those days discernibly weakened and exhausted with Theognis.[29]

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1 For the translation of *De Theognide Megarensi*, I consulted the Italian and German translations published respectively by Antimo Negri (Negri, 1985) and Christian Wollek (Wollek, 2010). I also consulted the German translation of Part III of *DTM* that appears in volume I of the Musarion edition, 439–48 (edited by Max Oehler, Richard Oehler and Friedrich Würzbach). For the translation of Theognis' verses I consulted Jean Carrière's French translation and Douglas Gerber's English translation (Théognis, 1962, and Gerber, 1999).

2 Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker (1784–1868) was a German Hellenist scholar who edited the work of a number of ancient Greek poets, among whom was Theognis.

3 The first (*transponendis*) has to do with the internal arrangement of a poem in particular, and the second (*meliorem ordinem digerendis*) with the general distribution and order of the entire work.

4 The *ratio critica* means the proper way of dealing with this manuscript tradition.

5 Gottfried Bernhardy (1800–75). Most probably Nietzsche made use not only of the already known *Theognis* (1826), but also of his famous *Griechische Götterlehre*, in three volumes, completed in 1862.

6 Henry Fynes Clinton (1781–1852) was an English classical scholar and historian. Désiré-Raoul Rochette (1789–1854) was a French archaeologist and classical scholar.

7 The 'phylae' were Dorian kinship groups (or tribes) in charge of administrative and military duties.

8 Hermann Gottlob Plaß, *Die Tyrannis in ihren beiden Perioden bei den alten Griechen: dargestellt nach Ursachen, Verlauf und Wirkungen* (1859).

9 An encyclopedic Byzantine lexicon compiled by Suidas during the tenth century included a biographical note on Theognis.

10 For γεγονὼς meaning 'born' in Suidas, see Carrière, 1948: 9–10.

11 Theodor Bergk (1812–81), a German classical scholar.

12 I.e. 'dissent that ruins the people'.

13 Max Wolfgang Duncker (1811–86).

[14] In other words, it is not the Syracusans who were besieged, but rather the Syracusans who besieged the city of Megara Hyblaea.

[15] Carrière gives a plausible explanation for the confusion that surrounds the identity of Theognis' birthplace (Carrière, 1948: 3–8).

[16] That is to say, to be favourable neither to the ancient authors nor to the recent.

[17] Dio Chrysostomus, *Oratio* II, *ad init.* (cf. Harrison, 1902: 87–8).

[18] Goethe, review of Wilhelm Ernst Weber, *Die elegischen Dichter der Hellenen*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, Paris: Tétot Frères, 1832, vol. 5, 118.

[19] Plato, *Meno* 95c–96a. Plato considers Theognis to be ambivalent as to whether virtue can be taught. To show this ambivalence, he contrasts vv. 33–6 and 437–8 of the *Theognidea*.

[20] Friedrich Wilhelm Schneidewin (1810–56), classical scholar, editor of the fragments of lyric poets. Nietzsche probably refers here to his *Delectus poesis Graecorum elegiacae, iambicae, melicae* (1838–9).

[21] Wilhelm Sigmund Teuffel (1820–78).

[22] Cf. Harrison, 1902: 87–8.

[23] Cf. Harrison, 1902: 89–91.

[24] Nietzsche dismisses Book II of the *Theognidea*, the so-called Boyish Muse (Μουσα παιδική), which constitutes the basis for charging Theognis with pederasty. Nietzsche believes that the author of Book II was a fictional ancient author or a medieval monk. According to Harrison, there is only one manuscript of the Theognidea which contains the Μουσα παιδική and that manuscript belongs to the tenth century. Suidas, who describes Cyrnus as Theognis' lover, also belongs to the tenth century. If 'Suidas was acquainted with the Μουσα παιδική, it was natural and proper that he should put the worse construction on the ambiguities of the first book' (Harrison, 1902: 98).

[25] The *syssitia* (τὰ συσσιτία) were the common meals – a type of *symposion* – in this case a public institution with similar laws, as Nietzsche says, among Spartans and Megarians.

[26] This *appellatium* is a noun without any actual existence.

[27] In this case it is presumably an envoy of religious character, either sent to consult an oracle, or to present an offering or to represent the city at a sacred festival.

[28] Theodor Bergk published in 1853 the *editio altera* of his *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*, where Theognis' text was edited among other Greek lyric authors.

[29] Grote wrote: 'Still less can we discover in the verses of Theognis that strength and peculiarity of pure Dorian feeling, which, since the publication of O. Müller's *History of the Dorians*, it has been the fashion to look for so extensively' (Grote, 1869: III, 44).

Friedrich Nietzsche
STUDIES ON THEOGNIS
Studien zu Theognis

Translated by Manuel Knoll and Renato Cristi

The fate of Theognis' elegies is to be explained by the reception they were given in antiquity. It is certain that they were written near the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the fifth, so that their publication took place shortly before, or possibly during the Persian Wars. What follows from this? That the drastic change (or revolution) of the national life that went along with the war had an effect on their reception? We know, from the elegies themselves, that, during the life of Theognis, they gained a vast audience in all of Greece, and we know the circles in which they thrived. These were the aristocratic clubs, which under the hostility of the tyrants, and the oscillating ups and downs of popular supremacy, tried to preserve the old aristocratic group-consciousness [*Standesbewußtsein*] through strict exclusion of all new elements. Elegies were meant for symposia, to be recited accompanied by flute music performed by youths. One must assume that at the time in question, Theognis, his fate and personal qualities, were known and his poetry was properly understood; that is, their essentially aristocratictrait was grasped and not confused, as it happened later, as having an ethical characteristic. The songs were composed for individuals, mainly to Cyrnus and other youths; they were sung in youth circles, where the singers were often and most of the time in the same situation as Cyrnus. That the singer was singing and referring to himself paraenetically was disregarded with the same uninhibitedness as today, in similar circumstances, girls sing Heine's hymns, in which Heine expresses his love, his irony and his grudge towards a girl.

One should establish that these poems, as outpourings of the soul, were not of an exclusive nature. They were representations of agitated inner life written in times of distress, of political turmoil, of seafaring, of wandering

around, of homecoming, of love and friendship. They were never written with the single-sided aim to teach but to relieve the soul. Among them, one finds pure moral scholia, but no elegies – a difference that one should not exclude from consideration. Then there are such songs as those generally brought out by a symposium, drinking songs, appeals to the gods, and so on.

The old aristocracy could not maintain itself beyond the Persian Wars. The transfer of wealth onto men of the people, and the universal spreading of knowledge and art, ruined a nobility of blood [*Geblütsadel*]. With this, Theognis' elegies lost the needed context which would have allowed them to be understood. The commoners approached them with different conceptions. One would now find ethical principles, when before one would find everything noble. References to sympotic communities were no longer understood. Theognis himself was no longer known. Nonetheless, under these circumstances, Theognis swiftly took root again. We can observe this in the case of the tragic poets. Aeschylus did not know him, at least he never alludes to him. In contrast, Sophocles often alludes to Theognis' thought and in such a way that political insights were reinterpreted as ethical ones (*confer* Theognis' vv. 731–52 with Sophocles' fragment on *Aletes*). So, in the course of fifty years, Theognis gained complete currency, particularly considering the fondness of the epoch towards gnomic poetry as represented in tragedy. If we proceed to the next fifty years, we find the weighty passages in Plato, Xenophon and Isocrates, that we must examine in greater detail. Plato compares him in *Laws* I, 630, with Tyrtaeus, the herald of courage, and attributes to him even greater meaning when he places justice (δικαιοσύνη), moderation (σωφροσύνη) and prudence (φρόνησις) above manliness or courage (ἀνδρία). He holds Theognis to be the representative and bard of the first three cardinal virtues. Thus, he is a teacher of morals; and so also according to the testimony of Xenophon (preserved by Stobaeus, *Sermones*, 88, p. 499). Xenophon reports that Theognis wrote about nothing but virtue (ἀρετή) and the wickedness (κακία) of human beings. His book was a work about human beings. In line with this, Antisthenes, a student of Socrates, wrote two books of a moral exhortative work *On Theognis* (περί Θεογνιδος), as Diogenes Laertius VI, 16, recounts. Indeed, Xenophon himself dedicated a book to him (Stobaeus). Most important is the testimony of Isocrates (*Ad Nicoclem*, ch. 12). According to Isocrates, as teacher of morals and as a

supreme measure (ἀρίστους συμβούλους), Theognis is highly reputed, but is read reluctantly because human beings dislike receiving advice. Theognis is mentioned here together with Hesiod and Phocylides. Together with the time of the nobility of blood, the apex of his fame had long past its prime. The recent pleasure derived from the gnomic was weakened by the philosophy schools and their extensive moral outbursts. Theognis was no longer read but his work became a school-book.

Up until this point, Theognis remained still intact; there were no excerpts yet made from his work. This is exactly demonstrated by the conclusion of Isocrates' text where it says: 'even if anyone prepared a selection of the so-called gnomes, on which those poets for the most part relied, nobody took an interest in them any longer'. First, one must conclude from this that, at that point, such a thing had not been attempted. Second, that in the original Theognis, not everything was 'gnomic', but only the predominant part (this is demonstrated by the term μάλιστα ['for the most part']). Third, that the gnomic part was at least the one that interested the Athenian public the most, which makes it clear that the remainder of the *Theognidea* which had personal quality was no longer understood – it was simply not taken into consideration. Welcker derives one more conclusion from this, albeit a dangerous conclusion: that one could gather from the foregoing that absolutely nothing that could have given sail to the lascivious was added to the book. By that Welcker understands sympotic and erotic songs. However, instructions for drinking and love would not appear to be lascivious by the zeitgeist, but as something antiquated and outdated, and that could be uninteresting. Precisely because Xenophon calls it a book about human beings, it is probable that the *Theognidea* dealt with the most diverse human conditions.

The Socratic school use of the book sealed it as a school-book. The gnomes were extracted and the children had to learn them by heart. This is not reported specifically with regard to Theognis, but is surely to be inferred from a text from Aeschines, *Contra Ctesiphontem* 525: 'I know that we as children learned the gnomes of the poet by heart, so that we could use them as grown up men.' That Theognis was among the first to have this fate allows us well to suspect his pedagogical exploitability. This fact has two different consequences: (1) the whole elegies gradually disappeared, and the excerpts (at first many-sided and numerous) became ultimately consistent; (2) the aversion towards Theognis on the part of the

public increased, as indeed school-books in general are frequently and undeservedly destined to decline in appreciation, a phenomenon that one perceives even now with Cornelius Nepos.

All the later witnesses were no longer acquainted with the whole of Theognis, but only with these gnomologies and excerpts of aphorisms. All sympotic and erotic verses were excised, indeed everything poetic. This is demonstrated by two passages from Dio [Chrysostomus], *Oratio* II and Plutarch, *De Audiendis Poetis*. The latter mentions the metrum as the only thing that uplifts the whole prosaic collection of aphorisms. The former narrates a story of Alexander, of how he, wrinkling up his nose, turned away from such books that pertain to the ordinary ignorant man: 'How could such reading benefit us?' Thus, it was formerly considered uninteresting, and now despicable. The *Theognidea* is seen as trivial. In this dishonourable condition, it dragged on through Antiquity. Cyril, whose book was written around 433, describes it as a wretched chrestomathy, which presumably nurses took care to recite to children and pedagogues to students. Julian [the Apostate] compared it to the proverbs of Solomon, which would be, with respect to the epoch, a great commendation. But those words by Cyril teach us that such an overestimation was not universal, but only an imperial whimsical idea, that out of his beloved paganism he would be able to reveal such beautiful writings as the proverbs of Solomon. Or is it simply intended as mockery?

How did that considered view, now presented before us, arise? Welcker assumes two possibilities: either that the reviewer collected excerpts from the complete work, or that he collected individual passages from other authors. Welcker opts for the latter. He very successfully disproves the first possibility by means of six counterarguments; but the second has not consequently become more likely. (1) It is inconceivable from what authors he [the reviewer] could have drawn, when we now have probably only a couple of hundred verses we can prove to have derived from old authors. (2) Rather, his review may have been completed using more excerpts of those gnomes. (3) This review had diverse points of view to keep in mind and was ordered according to various principles. (4) I believe that, here and there, I may recognize an alphabetical ordering. (5) Also, an order according to arguments. (6) Finally, one according to a rough consonance. Whether the concluding review was produced by one person or in a hundred years is indifferent. In any case, an image of Theognis gradually

came to light in the mind of the reviewer that approximated reasonably enough to reality. To its completion, other poems from other authors were introduced, which could have been composed by Theognis, although this could not safely be ascertained. A note from the sensitive Atheneaus presented Theognis as a not very great paragon of virtue; and an assembly of material, of which one knows not from where it was taken, consisting of sympotic and erotic, was added to the existing core. Now, Theognis' image further deteriorated. Ambiguities and a whole cycle of pederastic epigrams attached to him, so that a writer in the Suda expressed his anathema against scattered defilement (μιαρίαι) and pederasty (παιδικοὶ ἔρωτες).

This is how Theognis reached completion and is how we have him today. The picture that one obtains with skillful use of what we have, without removing anything, is a fairly secure one, though perhaps too darkly hued. Theognis appears as a sophisticated and run-down grand feudal lord [*Junker*] with feudal passions, loved in his own epoch, full of mortal hatred against an aspiring people, tossed about by a sad fate that grinded him down and made him milder in many ways. He comes into view as a characterization of that bright, somewhat corrupted, and no longer firmly-established nobility of blood at the crossing between an ancient and a new time; a contorted Janus head, because for him the past appeared so beautiful and enviable set against a future in and for itself of equal entitlements, loathsome and repugnant. Theognis appears as a characteristic mind of all those noble figures that represent an aristocracy on the eve of a popular revolution [*Volksrevolution*] that threatens their privileges for ever and makes them fight and wrestle with the same passion for their own caste and their own existence.

In what direction will Theognidean studies advance next?

(1) Determination of his life from his existing poems.

For this, the removal of everything questionable is necessary

A picture of the times and critique of notes concerning the condition of Megara

Discovery of the basis of the present notes and temporal determinations

(2) Determination of his song circles.

For this, the ancient sympotic poetry, especially the one from the old aristocracy is necessary
His relation to Cyrnus and his friends
What was the order of the elegies?

(3) Determination of the text.

Collection of Theognidean language and metric peculiarities.

The spurious passages.

Was the author of the Μουσα παιδική [*Musa Paedica* or *Puerilis*] a fictitious elder, a monk? etc.

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